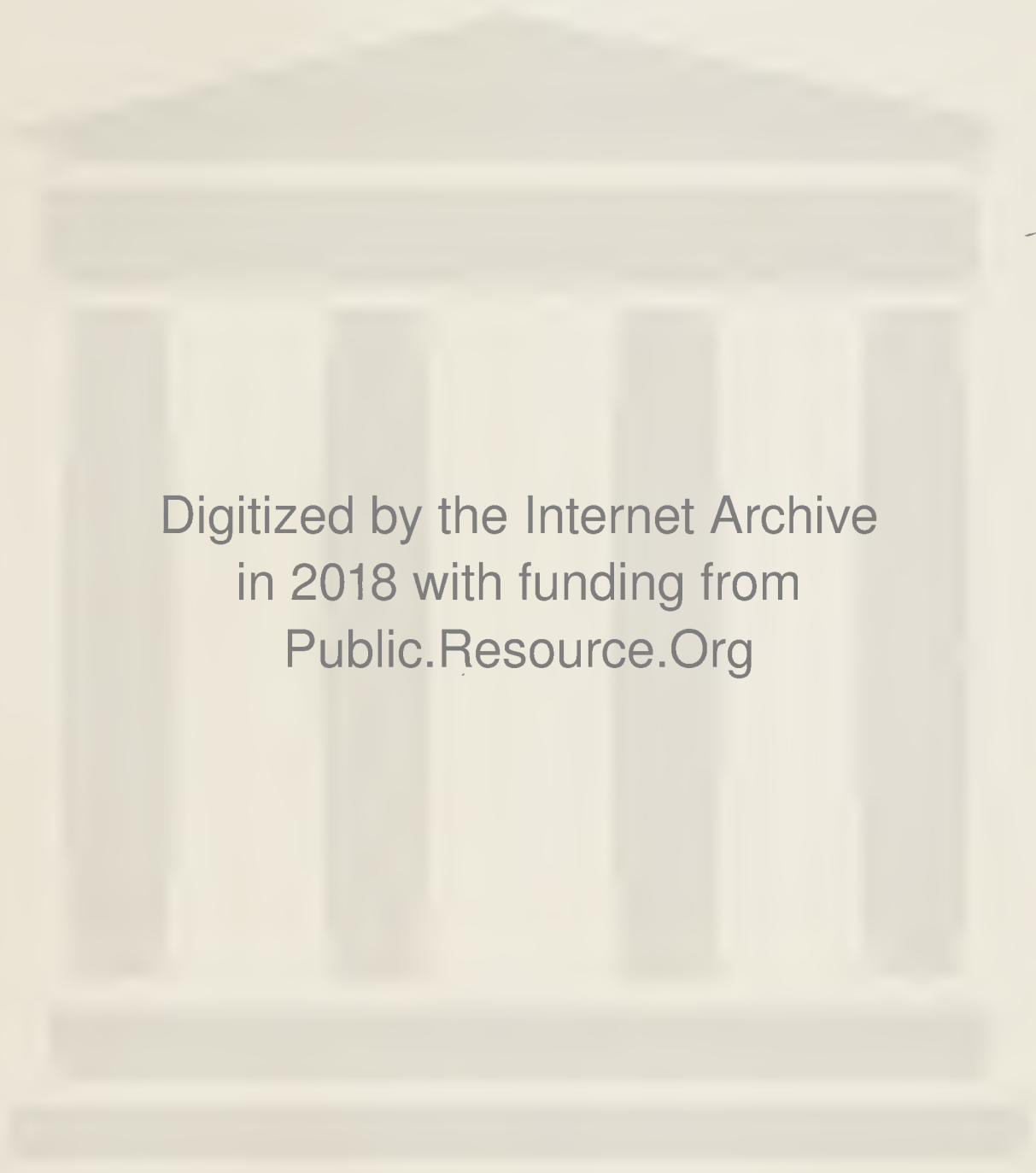


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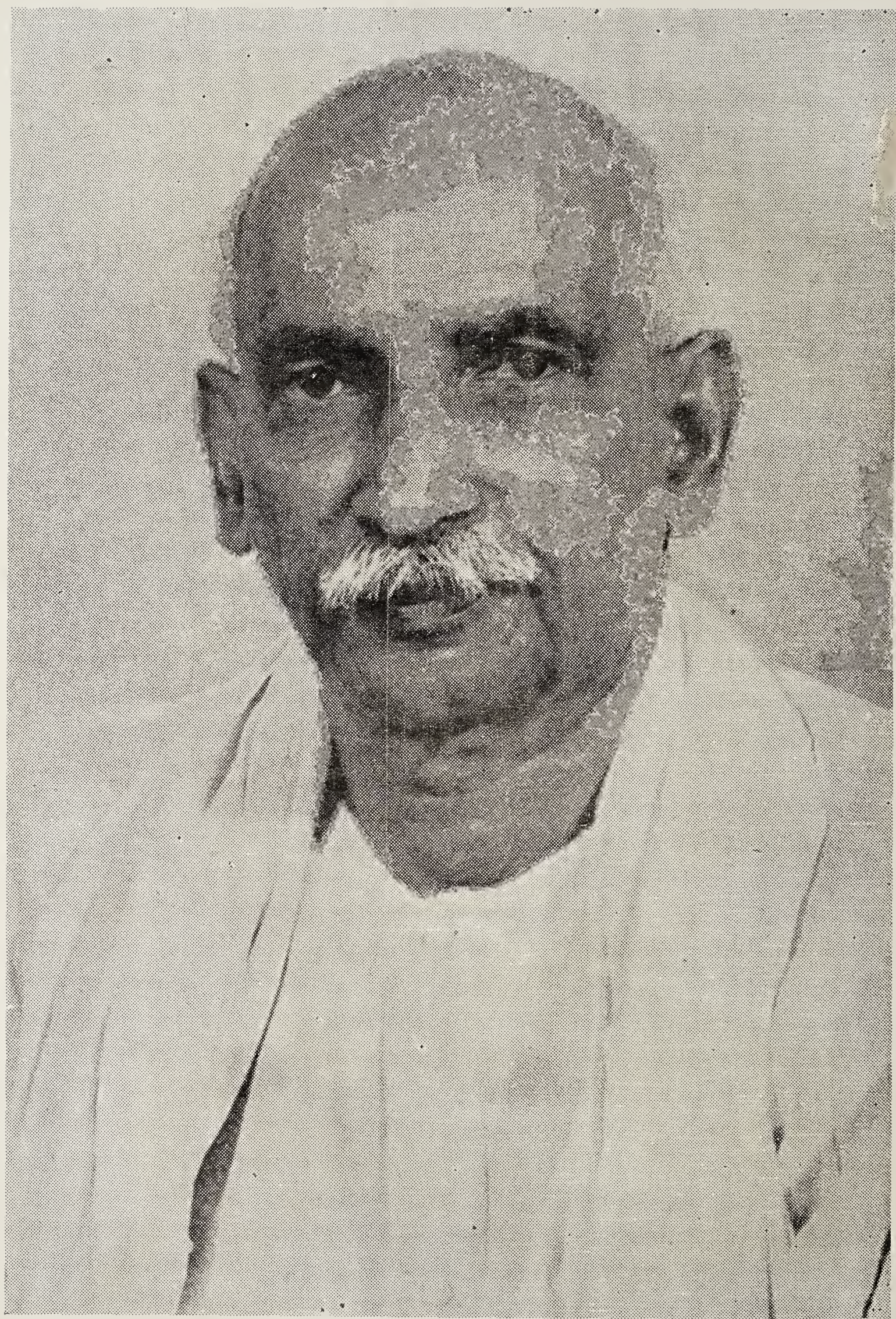
DR. PATTABHI
SITARAMAYYA

MAMIDIPUDI PATTABHIRAM



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Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya

BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

**DR. PATTABHI
SITARAMAYYA**

MAMIDIPUDI PATTABHIRAM

PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

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ABOUT THE SERIES

The object of this series is to record for the present and future generations, the story of the struggles and achievements of the eminent sons and daughters of India who have been mainly instrumental in our National renaissance and the attainment of independence. Except in a few cases, such authoritative biographies are not available.

The biographies are planned as handy volumes written by knowledgeable people and giving a brief account, in simple words, of the life and activities of the eminent leaders and of their times. They are not intended either to do comprehensive studies or to replace the more elaborate biographies.

The work of writing these lives has to be entrusted to different people. It has, therefore, not been possible to publish the biographies in a chronological order. It is hoped, however, that within a short period all eminent National personalities will figure in this series.

Shri R. R. Diwakar is the General Editor of the series.

PREFACE

Dr. Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitaramayya was one of the greatest Andhras to have played a significant role in provincial as well as national politics. Not many Andhras had ever become presidents of the Indian National Congress which under the guiding spirit of Mahatma Gandhi led the country to Independence. And if the Mahatma succeeded in achieving his objective of getting rid of the British in a bloodless revolution, it is to a great extent due to the unstinted support he received from his followers.

Dr. Pattabhi was truly one of Gandhiji's closest confidants and disciples prepared to do anything if only to please his leader. As the life and events described in this book show, Dr. Pattabhi was not just an astute politician but a gifted multi-faceted personality. He was as much a writer as a distinguished practitioner of the medical profession; he was an intellectual who could think and act for himself; he was an eminent historian without being just a chronicler; his knowledge of events was colossal and he was at ease at any gathering. In short, he was a versatile genius of the highest order.

I deem it a privilege to have been called upon to write on Dr. Pattabhi whom I knew from my student days and learnt to admire for his frankness and objectivity. His life story and the salient features enumerated in the pages that follow should enable the reader to come to his conclusions about the qualities of Dr. Pattabhi. It is perhaps unfortunate that he did not get the rewards due to him or even when they came, they were bestowed on him a little late. And yet, all that did not cause any despair. He was truly a builder of modern India. He had all the equipment for it and more.

I am thankful to Mr. G. Kasturi, Editor of *The Hindu* where I am working, for permitting me to undertake this assignment.

I have relied on original and secondary sources. Easily the most informative biography of Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya is that by Dr. A. Prasanna Kumar of the Andhra University. I have given the important references in the footnotes and the bibliography contains the full titles of the books consulted by me. My daughter, Dr. Padmapriya, assisted me throughout in preparing the manuscript and collecting and collating the relevant source material while my younger daughter Mamidipudi Priyamvada, a keen student of English literature, went through the typed script with care. I am thankful to them as, of course, to my wife and son, Mamidipudi Nagarjuna IAS, who spurred me to complete the work as per schedule. To Mr. S. Rangarajan, I owe a great deal for the promptness with which he executed the typing work.

December 23, 1982

62 Third Main Road, Kasturbanagar, Adyar,
Madras-600020

Mamidipudi Pattabhiram

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Early Life

DR. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA was one of the very few Andhra stalwarts who attained a national stature as a logical culmination of hard work and sincere approach to the country's baffling problems. For an Andhra, to achieve this distinction, is by itself a notable fulfilment. Forming part of a multilingual province and most of the Andhra areas situated remote from the Capital which was the hub of social and political life, it is amazing that an Andhra should have risen to the eminence that Dr. Pattabhi did. There have indeed been many others who were his contemporaries and who made politics their major occupation. Nyapathi Subba Rao, Mocherla Ramachandra Rao, B. N. Sarma, K. V. Reddy Naidu to mention but a few names were among those who made a mark and yet their influence was not as wide ranging as that of Dr. Pattabhi. They were all politicians of a different calibre who made no effort to enter a bigger arena. And for this reason, Andhra as such had nothing striking to contribute to the merging national scene as, for instance, did Uttar Pradesh or Maharashtra. It was left to Dr. Pattabhi to make up at least in part for this deficiency and if he succeeded in this endeavour, it was because of the grim determination with which he pursued his ideals, ideas and activities.

But what is really noteworthy is that a person who never had any backing worth the name to start with should have reached the pinnacle as it were. There lies the significance and glory of his life's work.

Born in a petty village in West Godavari district on Novem-

ber 24, 1880, he passed through a difficult and trying time in his childhood itself. He lost his father when he was two years of age and it was left to his mother to bring him up along with three other children—a son and two daughters. Even if the father did not leave a legacy, he had incurred huge debts which had to be cleared. And peace was purchased by parting with whatever land the family had. The next few years, from the age of seven, Pattabhi was literally battling with poverty. Yet he never grew despondent and that perhaps explains his eventual success. He said years later, "Poverty is no sin, no crime. When you survive it, you have a history behind you. It is the slave that becomes free, the poor that survives the onslaughts of starvation". No wonder he was one of those who gave up a lucrative professional career for a larger cause—to redeem the country from slavery of the British.

A turning point in Dr. Pattabhi's early life was when the family shifted to the much bigger town, Eluru. The realization that education held the key to progress was the motivating factor in influencing this fateful decision. He joined the Christian Mission High School and made rapid progress in his studies. It was said that the Bible influenced his mind. Judged by the catholicity of his outlook in the later years, it should have been a fairly correct and authentic statement. As a student he exhibited unusual versatility and resourcefulness. And he was next to none in all the examinations. But the first real break came when he passed the matriculation examination securing the much coveted first class. This success spurred him to seek fresh pastures and he landed in Machilipatnam in 1896, when he was just sixteen for higher studies. That must have been a fateful event, for Masulipatam, the coastal town of Andhra, was to become the nerve centre of Andhra. In fact, for the next several years, perhaps till the end, he stuck to this place notwithstanding the wider attractions bigger metropolitan cities tended to offer. He studied at the Noble College and passed the F.A. Examination in the first class. He won a scholarship which was reserved for

the best student in the class. Then came a time when he had to take a crucial decision about his future education. But he committed no mistake nor did he want to take any chances.

With the help of his well-wishers Pattabhi quickly made up his mind to go to Madras city which offered considerable scope for persons of his type to continue academic pursuits. From Noble College to the Madras Christian College seemed a logical step. As a student in this entirely new surroundings, he kept his eyes and ears wide open. It was here that he first saw Gandhiji in 1898. He had occasion to attend a session of the Indian National Congress which was still struggling to make its impact felt. He also observed eminent leaders of the day speaking eloquently and with passion at the session. All this must have made a deep impression on him, though entering public life did not seem at that point of time to have been one of his ambitions. Meanwhile, Dr. Pattabhi aroused interest among many and one of them was Ganjam Venkataratnam who was widely known in Andhra. Venkataratnam foresaw the potentialities of this young man on his very first meeting with him. This soon developed into deep admiration culminating in Dr. Pattabhi marrying the daughter of Venkataratnam. Wrote Dr. Pattabhi with a sense of humour : "Venkataratnam made up his mind to give his daughter to the poorest man available and there I had no rival in the field". One of the assets of Dr. Pattabhi was his ready wit which kept him in good spirits even in acute adversity. That explains his consistent success in the examinations, for to have obtained a rank in the B.A. Examination and won for himself a scholarship for doing the master's degree was not a trifling affair. Once again, he was in a dilemma for that was the stage when he should decide what he wanted to be. Ultimately he opted for the medical profession which in his own words was responsible for the spirit of full independence he could command in life, politics, and in the Congress.

Thus started a new and eventful phase of his career. He took to the medical studies with great earnestness and as a chal-

lenge, for there were very few at that time who took to medical education. There was a general belief among intellectuals that it was the legal profession that opened up chances of public life. And this explains why many an enterprising youth entered the portals of the law colleges. Further, there was money in the legal profession if one succeeded in it. But Dr. Pattabhi had other ideas and other ambitions. He was essentially an individualist and chalked out plans for himself even if those very close to him did not show signs of approval. His father-in-law, for instance, desired intently that he should practise the Law and eventually make a mark in public life. Yet he chose only the path he set for himself. As a medical student, he gained distinction and passed out of the college in 1906 with merit. His student career was not just confined to books. It was his good fortune that while he was in Madras he took keen interest in activities not purely academic. And this helped him to broaden his vision and widen his insight.

After securing the degree in medicine, Pattabhi went back to Machilipatnam where he set up private practice. This again was a hard decision that he had to make. It was even unconventional in a sense because quite a few in his position had opted for government service. He soon came into close contract with two leading members of the town—Kopalle Hanumantha Rao and Mutnuri Krishna Rao who supported fully and wholeheartedly his decision to set up medical practice. Even as he was fully engaged as a practitioner in medicine, he did not give up intellectual pursuits. On the one hand he acquired a name as a reliable doctor and on the other, he made a mark as a leader of public opinion. He became a popular figure and his friends thought nothing was impossible for him. This was the time the national movement was acquiring a new orientation and an added significance. Prominent leaders were going from town to town making fiery speeches to attract young men and women to participate in the struggle against the alien rulers. Dr. Pattabhi who had studied at the feet of the eminent educationist and social re-

former, R. Venkataratnam Naidu, and who came into close contact with other constructive workers could not keep himself away from the new wave. This explains his deep involvement and sustained interest in the politics of the day. As a result, he found himself playing different roles all at the same time—a physician and a publicist, a public worker and a patriot and above all a social reformer.

It was indeed remarkable of Dr. Pattabhi that even as he was practising medicine in which he proved to be an early success, he made patriotism his primary profession. It was this that was responsible for the many sided activities ranging as far from banking and insurance to education and co-operation. In all these the motivating factor was doubtless his abiding interest in politics and public life. Having as a young man been influenced by leaders of the Brahma Samaj and the Christian fathers, he responded with ease to the clarion call of the new prophets of India. He was as much inspired by the message of Swaraj as the cult of Swadeshi and that this should be so when he was barely twenty-six speaks eloquently of his idealism.

As has been the case with many public spirited young men of his time, Dr. Pattabhi was greatly touched by the sincerity of approach and earnestness of the mission of Bipin Chandra Pal. Touring the Madras Presidency in 1907, Pal took the whole province as if by storm and that was the beginning of a new era of nationalism in the country. Many an enterprising and devoted man and woman all over Andhra as in the rest of the country came under the influence of Pal—the external symbol of which was the founding of national schools everywhere. No wonder that Dr. Pattabhi pioneered the cause of national education by starting what he called the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala. But this was only a beginning of the larger tasks which he set for himself in the years to come. As Prof. M. Venkatarangaiya pointed out, “The national movement in Andhra which came along with the Vandemataram Movement in 1907 found its best expression in the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala of Masulipatam”.

How this institution heralded a new phase of education is by itself a matter for more detailed study. Suffice it to say at this stage that the Kalasala remained for long a model of its kind.

It was as early as in 1907 that he took part at the Bombay Congress session on Swadeshi. It is a tribute to his rhetorical talents that there was great appreciation for the manner in which he presented his views. An ardent advocate of Swadeshi he was thoroughly convinced that nationalism and the Swadeshi movement were inextricably intertwined. A few years later, speaking again in Bombay at another Congress session, he deplored the attitude of some leaders who made a mockery of Swadeshi. For him Swadeshi was all and everything and he was bitter against those who regarded it as just a fashion or a talking point and no more. Nor was he happy that it remained the fad of a few and the prejudice of the many. For him Swadeshi was not a formula to be mechanically uttered. He carried this message wherever he went, and spoke passionately about the vital need for an Indian system of national education and for a recovery of Indian culture and values.

For a man who thought in these terms and preached in these words, the ideal natural leader was Mahatma Gandhi. And that explains how he came under the influence and spell of Gandhiji. In other words, he became a Gandhian to remain Gandhian till the end of his life. He explained with mastery Gandhi's economics and in a manner no body else could and did. This was because Dr. Pattabhi was a publicist as much as a doctor. Three years after he gave up his lucrative practice in 1916, when he was just 36 he founded an English weekly. Appropriately, he called it *Janmabhoomi*. It was through the columns of this paper that he interpreted Gandhi and all that he stood for. As could only be expected, Dr. Pattabhi crossed swords with the Government which came down heavily on him by demanding a security for the press in which the weekly was printed.

In this context it might be useful to understand what Dr. Pattabhi had to say about Gandhiji long after he came into close contact with him. For him Gandhi was in the ultimate analysis a man but amongst men he was a superior man—a superman. In seeking freedom, Gandhi had not been in search of mere economic security. His was a struggle to construct a new type of society brimming with that emotional and spiritual security which mere economic freedom could not give. He had demanded and obtained liberty for the nation not that it might secure the right to do what it chooses but that it might choose to do what is right. Gandhiji believed in the common man and the common man was the material with which he had made his experiments in truth.

In other words, Gandhiji's faith lay in the uncontaminated purity of the millions of unsophisticated masses to whom he spoke in the language of their tradition and custom, their philosophy and religion, and whom he uplifted from the slavery in which they had been wallowing to the freedom which they ultimately won. It is the common man who through his incessant efforts and through his sympathetic understanding raises the level of his fellowmen and works out the greatness and the unity of his nation for the future. That greatness and the unity had been in the past brought about by him who bore the cross as well as by him who faced the cannon. Thus it is that the race progresses only by the extra achievement of the individual, Dr. Pattabhi had no doubt that it was for everyone in the society to aspire to be that individual. He minced no words about the need to practise Swadeshi for all time to come. "People ask me whether it is necessary to wear Khadi because Swaraj has been obtained. Well, if you don't want to lose the Swaraj, you should wear Khadi". That precisely is the philosophy of Dr. Pattabhi, which he endeavoured to inculcate among the people through his paper *Janmabhoomi*. It is a tribute to his political foresight that even before the advent of Gandhiji on the Indian scene, he anticipated and carried out, except for the *charkha*, every item of the

elaborate constructive programme of the Congress. How he was drawn into the political struggle and what forms his battles with the alien element assumed will have to be gone into in depth. But prior to this assessment, it will be worthwhile to understand his role as an educationist, for he was one of the earliest publicists who believed that the success to any reform lay in a well-ordained, purposeful education suited to the genius and traditions of the nation.

The Educationist

DR. PATTABHI was easily one of the greatest educationists of his times in the South and acquired a national stature in this sphere of activity much before he was recognized as a politician of country-wide fame. We have already referred to the founding by him of the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala in 1910. It was in the very same year that a book entitled *Indian National Education* was brought out in which he set forth his views on this critical and yet crucial activity. What is striking is the fact that while his doings were mainly confined to the coastal town of Machilipatnam, they had a wide-ranging impact all over the country, though it is true that the institution he started was by no means the only one of its kind, nor was it intended to set the pace for similar institutions that sprang up elsewhere in the country. The Andhra Jateeya Kalasala was a model that inspired the idealists and the nationalists alike.

Dr. Pattabhi was extremely critical of the British system of education. He believed that if education was to guide the individual towards the comprehension of the art of life, as indeed it ought to, it must energise his whole being and give him ideas of nature. Long after he ceased to be an active politician, he declared that education and citizenship do not merely follow each other as day and night but are vitally connected with each other as cause and effect. He was rather disappointed that even after attaining independence, the question how the education of the nation should be amplified, recast and strengthened remained essentially unanswered. In 1815 Sir Charles Trevelyan declared

that the opulence and leisure which had raised Britain to the pinnacle of glory were not required in India where they wanted only industrious husbandmen.

Dr. Pattabhi read and reread this statement along with what Mount Stuart Elphinston of Bombay said, namely, "The most important branch of education is that designed to prepare natives for public employment". It is, therefore, not very surprising that the education system as evolved and enforced by the British in India ignored the aspirations of the people. Dr. Pattabhi did not take long to realize that self-government and marked growth in education were interrelated factors. Education should develop the nation's genius and, therefore, it should help training of human souls in the pursuit of truth and practice of virtue. He was inclined out of true conviction to stress the twin objectives of moral purpose and integrity in any scheme of education. And it was here that national education became extremely relevant.

Dr. Pattabhi, like a few other nationalists of the day, believed that the English system of education was unsuited to the genius of the country. A true system should help the youth to appreciate the real greatness of the Indian culture. Even as he recognized some of the merits of Western education, he did not approve of its adoption in this country in toto or even in the form in which it was being inculcated, because of its imperialist aims and purposes. Further, education, he thought and rightly too, must enable the youth to make a decent living. He was almost the first to draw a distinction between knowledge that education imparted and the capabilities it could confer on the youth to acquire self-confidence. He was not for a system such as the British one which would turn out persons to become clerks. He was for one which would give a fillip to every aspect of the human personality.

Education should take care of literary, scientific and technical disciplines as well. In his scheme of national education, fine arts were accorded a place of honour. In a sense, he argued

that every study should excite and satisfy the different mental powers and faculties. Past culture, epics, drama, traditional ceremonies, festivals, arts and crafts—all these open out the mind and develop the right emotions. Education must give the pupils intellectual vision, aesthetic enjoyment and physical power. Human mind for him is a unity and all knowledge is, therefore, interdependent.

From this Pattabhi concluded that education, when developed on the right lines, must look to the whole man. Little wonder that he scoffed at the British system of education imposed in India and its votaries, for it lacked a moral purpose and integrity, betraying, to use his own words, “many into the grip of greed, selfishness and hatred.” At the same time, he was in favour of developing education through one’s own language. He was a staunch and ardent advocate of national education through essentially national institutions.

That indeed was the beginning of the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala which, as has been rightly described, made an effort to direct energies to the higher reaches of thought and life. It goes without saying that every effort was made to keep the institution going by raising funds from the public, the idea being that there should be no dependence whatsoever on the government. He was also particular that there should be people’s participation in this effort. The Kalasala soon became a temple of learning trying its utmost to implement a resolution passed in 1906 on the subject at the Calcutta session of the Congress.

Harijans gained entry in a big way into this college—an unusual feature of the day—and within a few years it started offering courses in civil engineering and handlooms.

Dr. Pattabhi was indeed a precursor of what Gandhiji himself had enunciated much after as the essentials of national education. Years later, Dr. Pattabhi said, “The empire outlook of Britain shaped Oxford and Cambridge and public schools of England so as to create faithful machine tools in human form to carry out

orders and not look into them. Theirs was not to think and theirs was but to obey.”¹ It would be interesting to study what Pattabhi also had to say about the narrow concepts that dominated education as evolved by the British. While what resulted was a purely literary scheme with accent on a wholly receptive and purely retentive talent, the originating aspect suffered neglect. It would be wrong to imagine that he was against modern devices of acquiring knowledge. He was for science and technology to promote self-sufficiency. He saw danger in imbalances if social harmony was not promoted by a well ordained scheme of national education suited to the local and national genius and dominantly relevant to the Indian needs.

Educating the youth is intended to create a social order in which human betterment becomes possible. In effect, co-ordination of the individual is the prime purpose of education. While the Jateeya Kalasala was a significant effort to translate into action his ideas on national education, it would be wrong to imagine that Dr. Pattabhi's educational effort ended with that. He pledged with all the force he commanded for a separate university for the Andhras. In the composite province of Madras which was at the time almost coterminus with South India barring a few Princely States, there was only one university. Colleges situated as far away as in Ganjam in the north and Tirunelveli in the south were affiliated to the Madras University. It was naturally difficult, if not impossible, for the University to cater to the special needs and requirements of diverse areas and regions in the province. Even as the demand for a separate province for the Andhras was gaining currency and momentum, a separate university for the Andhras was demanded. It was in 1926 that this became a reality though by that time many others had taken up the cause with zeal and sincerity. This is a clear indication of the abiding interest Dr. Pattabhi had in education of the right type in the appropriate mould.

1. *Speeches of Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Governor of Madhya Pradesh, Government of Madhya Pradesh, 1956, p. 133*

He was also concerned deeply with the principles of education. He addressed himself to the question of how to organise the stages of education. He asked himself the question whether we should think of primary, secondary and university education as a composite scheme of training of the youth and the educational organisation as one integrated machinery which handles the raw material of boys and girls introduced into it at one end and bring out the finished product at the other end after fourteen or fifteen years of teaching and tests memorisation and examination. He stood for a scheme of education which has as its object the extension of the frontiers of knowledge in all its varied and myriad aspects.

Dr. Pattabhi was the last person to talk in terms of rural and urban education. He said at a conference of educational experts five years after the attainment of freedom that our future endeavour should be to create a ru-ro-urban atmosphere civilisation and culture so that our towns shall be more rural in their outlook and our villages more urban; so that also the education, the industry and commerce and the administration of justice which are today the main attractions of the towns may be obtained in villages.

Not the least important aspect of his concern for education was Pattabhi's stress on literacy. He suggested that the task of making literate the illiterate masses must rest upon those who had themselves become literate and attained a certain degree of education. He passionately advocated a system under which every graduate should produce a certificate from a competent authority that he has made 250 illiterates literate before he was awarded a degree. He hopefully declared as long ago as in 1952 that these words should not fall flat upon the aspiring graduate. "I am in dead earnest when I make this suggestion." Nobody has taken up this sensible plea in seriousness though it is obvious that there really is no better way of solving this gigantic problem of illiteracy in the country.

To sum up, Dr. Pattabhi brought a vigorous national approach to the problem of education. He was one of those who brought to bear a larger perspective on the educational challenges of the day. Education and citizenship are vitally connected with each other as cause and effect. Indeed, he declared "they move in a healthy circle and while education helps in amplifying citizenship, citizenship in turn strengthens education."

Dr. Pattabhi had the penchant for doing the out of the ordinary. When he was the Governor of Madhya Pradesh as also the Chancellor of the Nagpur University, he took the rather unusual step of delivering before the annual convocation of the university a short address in Sanskrit and as he said, "took by surprise the audience which was not expecting such a change in the routine of the proceedings." He explained that he did so to emphasise that for us in India, Sanskrit is the fountain source of all the regional languages. This apart, it is invested with sacredness as the language in which are enshrined the scriptures of the nation as well as its sciences. The study of Sanskrit for him did not merely constitute an educational discipline pursued for general literary and cultural purposes. He did not agree with the view that Sanskrit was a dead language, the study of which may not be of any value to the student of the modern age. He turned the tables, as it were, on the critics by arguing that the mastery of a dead language—even granting that Sanskrit was such—involved the need for the type of talent as is required for the study of grammar with its complicated and complex rules of syntax, prosody and morphology. He epitomised in one sentence his praise for Sanskrit by saying that it was synonymous with the undeniable need for keeping alive the flame of genuine humanism and spirituality "which are the hall marks of Indian civilisation."

Dr. Pattabhi was somewhat of a constructive genius as well. He did not confine his activities to any particular sector of life. He took to banking and insurance as easily as to educational reforms. But the common underlying theme in whatever he did was his grim determination that dependence on the government,

particularly an alien government, should be minimal. It was in this spirit that he became a big votary of the cooperative movement. The Andhra Bank, the Andhra Insurance Company, the Bharat Lakshmi Bank and the Hindustan Ideal Insurance Company owe their origin and existence to the foresight and effort of Dr. Pattabhi. The question was not how efficiently they worked or even how long they existed. It was the philosophy, the spirit and the motivation behind these institutions that was crucially significant.

At the same time, Dr. Pattabhi was not an idealist in the extreme sense of the term. He blended practicality with what is ultimately desirable. The Andhra Bank which he started in 1923 is today a mighty institution with branches all over the country. It was nationalised more recently which itself is an indication of its financial viability. Much of its success is owed to his initial vigour and there are reports about the bitter battles he had to fight to set the Bank on the right lines. He founded the Bharat Lakshmi Bank which, however, merged with its predecessor. It was Dr. Pattabhi's confirmed view to make available the much needed funds to traders and farmers who were finding it extremely hard to secure monetary assistance. It was this national way of thinking that won for him approbation all over the country. He also founded two insurance companies which is clear evidence of his capacity for business organisation. These institutions provided employment opportunities for hundreds of qualified persons.

It should, however, be noted that these excursions into operations of a lucrative nature and purely materialistic purposes were not motivated by a desire to make gain or profit in the literal sense. Financial gain was never his preoccupation but just a side activity to be indulged in for the absorption of only a fraction of his surplus energy. These exercises enabled him to acquire a high reputation for business talent and had he utilised it to the full, he might have, in the words of the eminent journalist Khasa Subba Rao, who had known him intimately, easily revolutionised

the commerce and industry of Andhra Desa and ended his days as one of the country's most important financial magnates. He was content, however, to give the best years of his life to honorary service for the larger benefit of the public.

The impress of his ability found adequate expression in all the jobs and ventures he studiously undertook. Capacity for organisation came naturally to him without having to draw any lessons from acquired training or techniques. That not one of the undertakings he sponsored or guided had failed speaks of his remarkable qualities of management. He took an abiding interest in the Khadi programme of Gandhiji and if today Andhra Khadi is known all over the country for its fineness and quality, it is not a little due to the pioneering efforts of Dr. Pattabhi.

In essence, he was an extremely practical man. He was a pioneer of the co-operative movement and worked for its progress as devotedly as he pursued political causes. Of course, co-operation was also part of politics but he scrupulously kept the two apart from each other and as distinct entities. As in politics, he wanted self-reliance, purity and self-restraint in co-operation too. He was for the development of cottage industry, and machinery, according to him, was to be used not as the master but as the servant of man. Long before it became a national policy, he advocated establishment of a chain of land mortgage banks. In other words, what he wanted and strove for was spiritual democracy in which the idea of co-operative commonwealth occupied a predominant position and a pride of place.

III

Provincial Politics

DR. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA for all his multidimensional activities was essentially a politician. He was drawn into the vortex of public life at a comparatively young age and became one of the country's leading figures. As was the case with most politicians, he graduated into public life through intense and sustained work at the local and provincial level. It was not all velvet for him throughout. He had to contend with persons of equal calibre to acquire a national stature but where others in Andhra failed to make the grade he succeeded.

Curiously, it was national politics that attracted his attention first and yet he concentrated his attention on local affairs bringing to bear on them a truly national perspective. He was aware that unless he had a solid grounding it would not be possible to reach the higher levels. He stuck to his town of Machilipatnam from where he worked his way up. It was his versatility that came to his rescue for while men of the standing and stature of Prakasam and Konda Venkatappayya thought of politics and politics alone, Dr. Pattabhi made himself felt on many other fronts. Every action of his was preceded by careful planning and unlike many others of his day he did not give in to mere emotion or sentiment. When he renounced medical practice to enter politics, he made sure that he would not have to depend on others for continuing in the public life. He espoused the cause of the Andhra movement and was an ardent and passionate advocate of a separate State for the Andhras on a linguistic basis. In this effort, he succeeded because of his earnestness.

His paper *Janmabhoomi* came in handy for explaining to the people the causes he held dear. For instance, he used its columns to expose the fallacies of the Swarajists and also interpreted in his inimitable manner Gandhi and his philosophy. He was so successful as a journalist putting across national problems to the people that Motilal Nehru even offered him the editorship of his paper *The Independent*.

Two eminent journalists of Andhra, K. Rama Rao and K. Ishwar Dutt, known more in North India than in their home province had occasion to disclose the fact that Dr. Pattabhi was offered the editorship of some leading dailies, as for instance, *The Bombay Chronicle* which he rejected—the reason being his unwillingness to leave Machilipatnam. In fact, it was this town in Andhra Desa that became the focal point of politics and naturally Dr. Pattabhi felt no temptation was big enough to make him leave the place. He, along with two other stalwarts of the town Hanumantha Rao and Mutnuri Krishna Rao, provided what has been aptly described as the intellectual setting for the political upheaval in Andhra.

In 1913, a year held sacred by the Andhras, for it was in that fateful year that the first Andhra Conference was held at Bapatla, that Pattabhi enunciated along with others the principle of linguism and its inevitable relationship with nationalism. It was here that he clearly established that he had the making of a nationalist. Since he first got into the All India Congress Committee in 1916 he had been arguing for Andhras, closely adopting the methods pursued by the Tamil-speaking leaders in achieving given objectives. He was greatly impressed by the long list of names of Tamil leaders who dominated the provincial as also the national scene. Siva Swamy Iyer, Srinivasa Shastri, C. Rajagopalachari, G. A. Natesan and Vijayaragavachari, to mention only a few, were indeed names to reckon with. In the Andhra region there were not many who could be treated as their equals and it was Dr. Pattabhi's firm conviction that there was a lot to learn from them. He was impressed with the Rt.

Hon. Srinivasa Shastri's capacity for organisational work. He also described Natesan as one of the leading public men of the day. When Shastri wanted to visit Machilipatnam in connection with his Congress tour, he was warned by Natesan that there was a chance of his being belaboured at Machilipatnam. In Dr. Pattabhi's words, Shastri had an agreeable surprise when after being Pattabhi's guest for a week, he discovered "how courteous and reasonable we were." He realised that all his friend's apprehensions were totally unfounded. "And from that day in November 1908, till the day of his death, we remained ardent friends though all along belonging to opposite schools."¹

This incident is given in some detail only to show how Pattabhi treated the Tamil leaders and the regard he had for them. Similarly, the crucial role he played in the election of B. N. Sarma to the Imperial Council from Madras Presidency in 1916 speaks of his political acumen. Yet another factor which influenced his political thinking was his close contact with Dr. Annie Besant.

In Machilipatnam, Dr. Pattabhi progressed quickly, and knowing fully well that his future as a politician in a wider context depended on how he steered the course in the home town, he started expanding his base quietly but steadily.

Being no novice to political activity he worked his way up on the right lines. Almost the first thing he did was to involve himself in district affairs which inevitably led to his taking sides with one or the other of the important pressure groups. The Krishna District Board was at that time a bone of contention between the Kammas and the Kapus, both of whom constituted powerful caste oriented landed classes. He was on the side of the Kamma aspirant to the seat of power in the district board, Mr. Brahmayya. Simultaneously, he took up the cause of the Harijans.

In fact, the whole activity of Dr. Pattabhi will have to be viewed in the context of the Justice Party politics. This party

1. *Speeches of Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Governor of Madhya Pradesh, Government of Madhya Pradesh, 1956 p. 67*

came into being sometime in 1917 with the ostensible purpose of protecting and promoting the interests of the non-Brahmins as against what was thought to be Brahmin imperialism. It was the Brahmins in the province as a whole who dominated education, and therefore, employment and politics. Every leader in these domains happened to belong to the Brahmin community. Even if this was not a deliberately contrived affair, the general feeling among non-Brahmins was that they were being oppressed and to an extent suppressed by the Brahmins. This common animosity towards the Brahmin community brought many a non-Brahmin together. And the Justice Party was the political instrument through which they wanted to settle scores with the Brahmins. This class appeal by the non-Brahmins found favourable response among many sections and since they were in a majority in the province, they carried the day for the time being.

Dr. Pattabhi being a Brahmin had a difficult task before him. It was not as if the Congress Party was all Brahmin. Only the feeling of caste differences was not as acute and pronounced and was very much subdued in comparison to what it was in the Justice Party. However, his role in communal politics of Andhra was somewhat vitiated by certain natural limitations and not until the Justice Party went down under its own weight did Pattabhi come back to his own in state politics.

It was not as if Dr. Pattabhi had no rivals among Andhra leaders. Men like Venkatappayya, Prakasam and others did not see eye to eye with Pattabhi whether it was in relation to the Khadi movement or the Andhra Province issue. The fact that Dr. Pattabhi was close to Gandhiji made him suspect in the eyes of his colleagues who even went to the extent of saying that he was carrying tales to Gandhiji against them. The truth was otherwise. Dr. Pattabhi, as M. Chalapathi Rao who knew him at very close quarters observed, emerging from the exciting phase of the politics of the partition of Bengal, attending congress sessions, became a Gandhian and remained a Gandhian.² It took

2. *Triveni*, October-December 1980, p. 13

several years for Nehru to understand Gandhi completely. But it was left to Dr. Pattabhi to explain with mastery and eloquence Gandhian philosophy. It is, therefore, not surprising that this staunch advocate of Gandhism came into conflict with other Andhra leaders who were critical of Gandhiji. He crossed swords with groups led by Prakasam and Ranga and Andhra politics was riven by factional fights. Dr. Pattabhi took a leading part in the debates of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee from the very beginning though he functioned more as an elder statesman than as a person with a crucial stake in their deliberations.

For instance, at the first meeting of the newly elected APCC in 1923, he walked in as the proceedings had reached a climax. The whole country was then greatly agitated over the wide differences of opinion entertained by different leaders of the Congress on some of the most fundamental questions determining the policy and scope of work to be carried under the aegis of the organisation. It was, therefore, natural that the APCC also met to consider the problems. The meeting was fully attended with Prakasam, who was elected President, conducting the deliberations.

The general view was that the Swarajists had flouted the Congress in its force and indulged in counter propaganda quite in defiance of the mandate given by the "mother organisation". A good majority of the speakers were not sure that any of the numerous courses of conduct proposed to be adopted by the would-be successful candidates of the Swaraj Party could bring the country nearer Swaraj. Freedom through Council entry was not a feasible proposition and they wanted a special session of the Congress to reconsider the whole position.

It may be mentioned in this connection that the idea of Council-entry to fight the Government from within was bitterly opposed by leaders like C. Rajagopalachari, M.A. Ansari, Dr. Pattabhi and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. This led to the emergence of

two groups and the ultimate formation in 1923 of the Swaraj Party whose aim was to attain Dominion Status for India within the British Empire. Its leaders—C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Vithalbhai Patel—toured Andhra where the people were in favour of status quo generally and it was only the next year that the Congress Party permitted the Swarajists to function as an integral part of the party in the councils. Outside the councils, the Congress concentrated its attention on constructive programmes like popularising Khaddar.

At the APCC meeting, which has to be viewed in this background, Dr. Pattabhi argued that the mere acquiescence on the part of the majority people at the doings of the Swarajists in their campaign to capture the councils will do no good but will be productive of great harm. He considered expediency as relevant in determining political action though for his part he was not prepared right then to strengthen the hands of the Swarajists to capture the councils but only bide his time till better days dawned.

The next few years, Dr. Pattabhi was seriously involved in the local politics and came into limelight because of his capacity to outwit other leaders. But as long as Prakasam was the organisational chief as President of Provincial Congress Committee, there was little that Pattabhi could do. It was in 1937 that he became the President of the APCC—Prakasam having vacated the office on becoming the Revenue Minister in the first popular ministry led by C. Rajagopalachari—defeating N. G. Ranga in the contest. But he did not remain long as the chief, for two years later he resigned and once again Prakasam came back to head the organisation.

It will be interesting to note the significant part which Dr. Pattabhi played in the coming into being of a separate provincial Congress committee for the Andhra region as early as in 1917. It was at the Calcutta Congress session that a resolution was adopted recognizing Andhra as a separate Congress circle. This

was in fact linked with the wider question of a separate province for the Andhras.

Though initially the Congress was not enthusiastic about a separate body for the Andhra region, in 1917, the All India Congress Committee to which it was referred accepted the principle after duly consulting the provincial Congress committees of Madras and Bombay. It was then resolved that the Telugu-speaking districts of the Madras Presidency be constituted into a separate Congress province. According to Dr. Pattabhi, the idea was opposed by Dr. Annie Besant who presided over the Congress session in 1917 as well as by "some Tamil friends from the South".³ Ultimately, the idea was accepted and it became the guiding principle for a total redistribution of the organisational pattern. In the then nine British provinces, there were at least twenty-one Congress circles.

Dr. Pattabhi also devoted considerable attention to promotion of Khadi after he gave up the presidentship of the APCC. It was his belief that Congressmen should fully subscribe to the programme of national reconstruction enunciated by Gandhiji.

In fact the Khaddar Enquiry Committee appointed by the All India Congress Khaddar Department visited Andhra in July 1922 and reported : "Andhra Desa stands ahead of nearly all other provinces with the possible exception of the Punjab in the matter of Khadi production. It has won a fine reputation for its fine Khaddar. Private enterprise is greatly responsible for the progress Andhra Desa has made in Khaddar production. Andhra has a bright future in Khaddar and with redouble energy and concentration, Andhra may easily become the largest Khaddar producing province in India."⁴

3. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *The History of the Indian National Congress* Vol. I, p. 148

4. Prasanna Kumar, A., *Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: a Political Study*, p. 111

Andhra, under the inspiring guidance of Dr. Pattabhi, further intensified the Khadi programme. At a meeting of the A.P.C.C. held on February 16, 1923 steps were even taken to establish what has come to be called a Khaddar Central Bank under the command of Dr. Pattabhi.

Dr. Pattabhi laid greater stress on constructive work than on entering office and yet he knew that it was a wise decision that Congressmen formed ministries in several states in 1937. Reports were current that he was himself offered a minister's post by Rajaji which he declined. He was a stickler for principles and it was this that brought him into conflict with many of his colleagues in the Andhra region.

However, Dr. Pattabhi played a role worthy of his stature and standing in Andhra politics. Especially during the Satyagraha movement in 1930, Andhra was pulsating with tremendous activity. Congress Committee meetings were held throughout the country to organise camps for training volunteers and to acquaint the people with the essentials of the movement.

Andhra area was known by them for its anti-British activities as when demonstrations were held against the Governor's visit to the east and west Godavari districts. The District Congress Committee of Krishna, the home district of Pattabhi, staged a black flag demonstration asking the Governor to go back. The Andhra Provincial Congress Committee entrusted the work relating to Satyagraha to Konda Venkatappayya. Centres were located for each district ; for Krishna it was in Machilipatnam. Dr. Pattabhi advised that the Salt Satyagraha movement should be dispersed to different centres so that the government would not be able to concentrate its armed forces at any one centre. He told the meeting of the APCC held in Guntur on March 22, 1930 that his idea, if implemented, will have the effect of dividing the forces of the enemy government.

The District Magistrate of Krishna was constrained to observe: "Pattabhi Sitaramayya had throughout a long career of anti-

government activities hitherto avoided being sent to jail. But during the previous movement as also in the early stages of the present movement he was the 'brain' behind the whole organisation." A more fitting tribute could not have been paid to Dr. Pattabhi who was made of an entirely different mould as distinct from his contemporaries, who also played a significant role in Andhra politics.

Dr. Pattabhi loved debate and argument and controversy was the very breath of his life. He was indeed a big controversial figure and as has been aptly said by those who knew him at close quarters, he was one with something of the opposition mentality in the sense that he was more keen on holding the mirror to the government than handing to it a series of bouquets out of a mistaken sense of loyalty. Tilak and Mrs. Besant were among the earliest to recognize his qualities, while other national leaders were not slow either, to acknowledge his astuteness. Whether it was on the philosophy of spinning or the intricacies of the economic problems, he could speak with a great sense of understanding and clarity. He was really not cut out for the narrow provincial politics which, in the crucial years between 1937 and 1946, was plagued by intense groupism, personal rivalries and caste politics though he tried his best to play his role in the given circumstances.

As an instance in point, it will be relevant to quote a passage from N.G. Ranga's article on Swami Sitaram. He says: "For many years Sitaram was in charge of the khadi production in the whole of Andhra under the guidance of Konda Venkatappayya, and all the khadi workers who formed the majority of the then active Congressmen used to work under him. But when Dr. Pattabhi and his few followers succeeded in persuading Gandhiji to remove them from the leadership of that major programme, Sitaram and Venkatappayya demonstrated their spiritual protest by starting an independent Guntur District Khadi Pratistan with powers to have its branches for production and sale in other districts also, in rivalry with the main Khadi organisation

which came to be handed over to the wordly-wise but equally patriotic Pattabhi and his adherents.”⁵

This was the assessment of N. G. Ranga, who was Dr. Pattabhi's rival and belonged to a different caste.

Dr. Pattabhi never had any mass appeal of the kind enjoyed, for instance, by Prakasam. In fact, for many years, Dr. Pattabhi and Prakasam were rivals, the latter having the upper hand because of his closer intimacy with the people. Though Prakasam entered the political field much later than Dr. Pattabhi, he acquired a dominant position in Andhra politics. It was, however, the developing contacts which Dr. Pattabhi had with Gandhiji that enabled him to get the better of many an Andhra publicist. Added to this was the fact that another stalwart of South Indian politics at that time, C. Rajagopalachari, was also opposed to Prakasam.

In respect of political views too, Prakasam and Dr. Pattabhi differed with each other. Not being essentially a man of the masses, Pattabhi was averse to contesting any elections and this must have influenced his dislike for office acceptance. Further, Prakasam became the idol of the people everywhere for the pronounced courage and valiant determination he displayed consistently. Whether it was giving up a lucrative legal practice when he was at the height of glory or facing policemen wielding lathies, Prakasam did not think twice before coming to a decision. On the other hand, Dr. Pattabhi never acted in a huff though he too gave up his profession to enter politics. He planned every little step he took with care. He was calculating and not given to emotional outbursts. He was an intellectual. At a time when people measured the worth of an individual more by his sacrifices than by any other yardstick, it was always Prakasam and not Pattabhi who was on top. And yet Pattabhi never gave up or pursued something in which he had no belief just to pamper others. While Prakasam was not taken into confidence by those

5. Ranga, N.G. *Distinguished Acquaintances*, Vol. II, p. 400

who mattered in the higher bodies such as the Congress Working Committee and, of course, he did not even make an attempt in this direction, Dr. Pattabhi became a big success and soon acquired an impressive equation with national leaders.

As has been observed by one of the writers, "Dr. Pattabhi was highly articulate and constructive in his role as member of the Congress Working Committee. After his joining the Committee in 1929, he steadily built up his position and proved to be an asset to the Committee. The fact that he was invited as a special member to attend the Committee meetings when he was not on this powerful body confirms the point.⁶ It is this special trait in him that enabled him to be among the prominent leaders of Andhra. His oratory was torrential. In committees he was alert and critical and never spared anyone. He was more than a match for many of his contemporaries in the Andhra area. And it is this that ultimately led him to seek fresh pastures at the national level and not confine to provincial politics alone. He got on well with national leaders like Rajendra Prasad and Maulana Azad. However, being essentially an individualist, as has already been noted, he did not gain any position of striking importance at the national level after Independence.

All in all, his role in provincial politics was limited and that, among other things because he was not the kind of person who could totally lose sight of national perspectives. And yet a significant achievement to his credit was that he effectively countered the growth of the Justice Party in Madras by not hesitating to associate himself with non-Brahmin leaders too. If the emergence of caste groups vitiated Andhra politics somewhat, it was left to men of the calibre of Dr. Pattabhi to temper the severity of this phenomenon by adopting a realistic approach to the problems on hand. In the end, when it was found that the Congress Party made no distinction between one caste and another,

6. Prasanna Kumar, A. *Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya op. cit.*, p. 101

and that it gave due recognition to all groups, more and more people joined the organisation to carry on the bitter struggle against the British.

It is a moot question as to what shape Andhra politics would have taken if Pattabhi and Prakasam had worked in unison. Given their differing temperaments and intellectual attainments, their varied capacity to carry people with them and their differing predilections it was next to impossible for them to have come any closer. And that has been the bane of Andhra politics. But a not well known fact that deserves to be recorded is that inspite of all this, Dr. Pattabhi advocated the cause of Prakasam for heading the government in the composite Madras State in 1946 while Rajagopalachari used his greater influence with Gandhiji to foil this.

As a rule, the Andhras did not get adequate representation in the higher circles of the Congress party. The reason could be that there were not many who had an all-India image or that those who had a real standing in provincial politics did not choose to enter the wider arena. Dr. Pattabhi for one studiously pursued an entirely different path and that explains why it was he and not the others in Andhra who attained what could be described as an important position at the national level.

National Politics

DR. PATTABHI took up national causes at a comparatively young age. It was in 1908 when he was 28 that he attended the Madras Congress session as a full delegate. He was by then convinced that the Congress was a party fully wedded to constitutional agitation. He was impressed by the dictum laid by Surendranath Banarjee as early as in 1886 at the Calcutta Congress session that "every nation should be the arbiter of its own destiny". He was also impressed by the fact that even the government of the day in the beginning of the century preferred distinguished Congressmen to important posts.

Whether it was Tej Bahadur Sapru or B. N. Sarma or Ashutosh Mukarjee or S.P. Sinha and in the South, S. Subramanya Iyer or V. Krishnaswamy Iyer or K. V. Reddy, they were all associated with the Congress in one form or another before they were offered prize positions by the government. Dr Pattabhi was well aware that while the people were showing increasing signs of self-consciousness, the retrograde policy of the government between 1900-1906 was making itself more and more assertive and even more naked. In his opinion in the very first few years of its existence, the Congress Party, if nothing else, had discovered its own destiny and focused the thoughts and activities of the nation to a single point. It developed a certain self-consciousness as it were among the teeming millions and animated them with a sense of unity, hope and self-confidence. The Congress succeeded from the very beginning in giving a distinctly national turn to the thoughts and ambitions of the people and

enabled them to rediscover their common language and literature, their common crafts and arts, and above all, their common aspirations and ideals. No wonder Dr. Pattabhi threw in his lot with this organisation which showed great vitality and powers of adaptability and survived all the attacks made on it by the government of the day. For nearly thirty-six years without a break he continued as a member of the All India Congress Committee. Throughout his career, as a Congressman, he stood by Gandhiji and his creed of non-violence. It was in 1919 that Gandhiji firmly advocated at the annual Congress session the idea and the ideal of Truth and Non-violence which attained considerable significance, especially in the context of the atrocities committed in Punjab and the mob violence that erupted elsewhere. A year later, Gandhiji declared that he would strain every nerve to make Truth and Non-violence accepted "in all our national activities." Ultimately, in the 1920 session of the Congress, non-cooperation as enunciated by Gandhiji took birth.

The resolution on non-co-operation was truly conceived as a measure of discipline and self-sacrifice without which no nation could make real progress. As part of this, Swadeshi was advocated and the people were advised to revive hand spinning in every house and hand weaving on the part of the millions of weavers who had abandoned their ancient and honourable calling for want of encouragement. A new atmosphere pervaded the country. Dr. Pattabhi fully accepted the Swadeshi programme and the non-cooperation creed and started working in the Andhra region to achieve these twin objectives.

Explaining the philosophy of khadi on another occasion years later, Dr. Pattabhi said that when Gandhiji espoused khadi, he was only reviving a practice which had become defunct. Gandhiji did not create a charkha. The principle had been there for centuries. In his truly characteristic manner, Dr. Pattabhi said that it was not as if the saints and sages of old, the kings and philosophers and the priests and the people of those ancient days, or coming to later times, the kings that ruled the

fifty six kingdoms of India, their generals and ministers, Sivaji and the Maharashtra princes, the Rajputs and the Sikhs and the Jats—all these were going naked or clad in bark cloth or besmeared in ashes to cover their nudity. No, they were wearing the finest hand spun, hand woven cloth. The Dacca mulls went upto 400 counts in fineness.¹ He recalled how when Aurangazab's daughter came to her father's court dressed in Khaddar mulls, the father chided her for coming to his court almost semi-naked and then the daughter showed her garments consisted of seven layers of muslins. Such was the glory of the spinners. Dr. Pattabhi himself possessed a piece of cloth made of nearly 400 counts of yarn spun upon a *takli* by a Congressman of the East Godavari district. He was convinced that whole villages were thrown out of work by the import of cotton fabrics. Thus the import of foreign goods, notably cloth, destroyed the economy of the whole country. Dr. Pattabhi saw in Gandhiji's prescription for revival of Khadi and village industries a tremendous opportunity to rebuild the prosperity of the country and save it from the prospect of wide-spread discontent and suffering.

At a time when prominent Congress leaders were not prepared to fully subscribe to the views of Gandhiji—whether it was Khadi or Council entry, non-co-operation or rural reconstruction—Dr. Pattabhi supported him with full conviction. The universal appeal and message which Gandhiji tried to spread among the people attracted Dr. Pattabhi most, who, unlike the other provincial leaders, took up in earnest the nationalist programme. Thus he adopted a wider emphasis to his political activity and did not view it in the narrow context. Dr. Pattabhi achieved national recognition as the authentic interpreter of Gandhiji and Gandhian thought.

There was no important thought or speech to which he gave expression without a reference to Gandhiji's ideals of Truth and

1. *Speeches of Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Governor of Madhya Pradesh, Government of Madhya Pradesh, 1956, p. 335*

Non-violence and Swaraj and Civil Disobedience. He recalled the significance of Gandhiji's concept of non-co-operation as under; "The barbarous method (if the demands of the Indian people are not granted) is warfare, open or secret. . . . If I (Gandhiji) could but persuade everyone that this is always bad, we should gain all lawful ends much quicker. The power that an individual or a nation forswearing violence can generate is a power that is, irresistible. But my argument today against violence is based upon pure expediency, and utterly futile. Non-co-operation is, therefore, the only remedy left open to us. It is the clearest remedy, as it is the most effective, when it is absolutely free from all violence. It becomes a duty when co-operation means degradation or humiliation, or an injury to one's cherished religious sentiment. England cannot expect a meek submission by us to an unjust usurpation of rights . . . Non-co-operation does not apply to service under private individuals . . . every step withdrawing co-operation has to be taken with the greatest deliberation. We must proceed slowly so as to ensure retention of self-control under the fiercest heat."² Precisely this, Dr. Pattabhi propagated all over the country, and more especially, in the Andhra region where there were quite a few who had reservations about the efficacy of non-co-operation. Dr. Pattabhi was certain that placed as the Indians were at that time, liberation from the British was possible only through the principles enunciated by Gandhiji. Gandhism thus became a well known expression to symbolise Gandhiji's philosophy of Truth and Non-violence.

Interestingly, Gandhism does not represent or at least that is what Gandhiji wanted, any new religion or creed. He himself said "I do not claim to have organised any new principle or doctrine. You will not call it Gandhism, there is no term about it."³

2. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 191

3. Prasanna Kumar, A., *Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : a Political Study*, p. 127

Dr. Pattabhi carried this message in his writings too, telling everyone that Truth and Non-violence are as old as the hills. It was his meticulous interpretation of Gandhiji that won for him a wider stature than had been possible for his contemporaries.

However, Dr. Pattabhi knew only too well how, to a politician, who was charged with the daily conduct of affairs, certain deviations from the doctrine of absolute non-violence might become inevitable as when force was used by the authorities in the name of maintaining law and order, or in the arrest and detention of anti-social elements and so on. This only went to show that while being articulate and eloquent, he was deeply alive to the practical problems that would have to be faced by those who swore by Gandhism.

In the Congress sessions he was for years an outstanding participant willing to spare nobody and no wonder he not unoften ruffled other's feelings.

Writing about him, an intimate associate of Dr. Pattabhi said, "He spoke with clarity and fluency and, at the same time, never hesitated to speak bluntly even if it hurt others as long as he believed what he said was in the larger interest."⁴ Dr. Pattabhi answered the criticism that Gandhiji was only a revivalist by advancing the argument that this enquiry was made with a certain spirit of depreciation though not derision. According to him, Gandhiji made no secret of the fact that he built upon India's past. Nor did he suggest a wholesale demolition of tradition and authority on the debris of which to build his new welfare state.

Dr. Pattabhi's exposition of Gandhiji is a class in itself. As one who had worked with Gandhiji and observed him at the closest quarters and who enjoyed the full confidence of this great soldier in the cause of India's freedom, he sought to remove certain false notions about Gandhiji. Gandhiji, Pattabhi made it

4. *Triveni*, October-December 1980, p. 32

abundantly clear, believed in the four *varnas*—not indeed to perpetrate them as an ascending order based on status or a descending order based upon contract. On the contrary he but sought to evolve a new synthesis of the four castes under which service and sacrifice were not to be imposed on one set of workers by another set of drones or parasites, but they were to be regarded as obligations in society which were voluntarily undertaken and cheerfully discharged—obligations in which again wealth and prosperity were not to be inherited or accumulated as a possession but were to be regarded as a trust, in which to sow the seed and reap the harvest, to spin and weave, to dig and delve, to build and beautify, were not to be reckoned as acts of menial service associated with degradation in society, but as terms of ministration which exalted labour above authority and want above wealth. Dr. Pattabhi was firm in his belief that Gandhiji respected the structure of Hindu society and the constitution of the Hindu home. As an instance in point, Dr. Pattabhi has referred to Gandhiji's statement that he was a farmer and weaver before a magistrate who was trying him in 1922, while all the while he was a warrior who fought the British in a non-violent war and the mentor and monitor of the world preaching Truth and Non-violence. Dr. Pattabhi also studied the implications of Non-violence as preached and practised by Gandhiji and came to what appeared to him the irresistible conclusion that Non-violence or *ahimsa* was not just a negative factor but a positive force. At best it is a direction—not a destination, an attempt, not an attainment. He had his own way of explaining the creed of *ahimsa* in a telling manner intelligible to the ordinary man. It is here that Dr. Pattabhi was different from other leaders of his times. He was cogent and cautious, unambiguous and clear—all because he understood Gandhiji in a manner few others did.

When human society, says Dr. Pattabhi, requires weapons to protect lives, it makes man no higher than the beast. The tiger has its claws, the lion its paw, the elephant its tusks, the bull its horns but man has no offensive weapon. With his native humour

and biting sarcasm, Dr. Pattabhi says, man has only his tongue, which can both offend and defend. "Is this village good", asked a traveller of a yokel and got the reply, "If your tongue is good, the village is good". Where then his wisdom, queries Dr. Pattabhi—it is in the Biblical saying, "Vengeance is mine".⁵ As he observes, the very beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, the tiger in his lair, the lion in his den, the hawk in its nest, the dove in its niche are happy. Everything is beautiful in the nature. Man alone is vile. Human nature, in Gandhiji's belief, is essentially non-violent, but greed, anger, miserliness, delusion, pride and malice—have made man violent and untruthful. Gandhiji, therefore, set about the task of defining new values, social, economic and political.

Dr. Pattabhi's assessment was that purity to Gandhiji was higher than piety, even as dignity was higher than dress. Nobility was higher than birth, even as eminence was higher than wealth. Power was more than force, even as influence was more than authority. Democracy was more than numbers and justice was more than law. Civilisation must transcend tradition, even as culture outgrew knowledge. Religion was no more of ceremonies than prayers was of praises. Love and service constituted to him the quintessence of Gandhiji's gospel, the basis of religion, the inspiration of his faith and the fountain source of his cosmopolitanism.

Dr. Pattabhi was one of the earliest to see the validity of the views and doctrines expounded by Gandhiji and, as with him, he also was convinced that with Truth as the sword, and *ahimsa* as the shield, there could be no other weapon to reclaim the erring brother, or even the vindictive opponent, or wield authority over mankind. He had the penchant for the right word, the right phrase and so said that in Gandhiji's view to call a spade a crow bar was wild exaggeration while to call it a needle was gross underrating.

5... *Ibid.* p. 7

Having thus interpreted Gandhiji, Dr. Pattabhi also took upon himself the task of erasing from the public mind the wrong impression that Gandhiji was inconsistent. The reference here is to Gandhiji's sudden change of decisions, on Satyagraha from time to time. He said that Gandhiji did not have a permanent programme of action and led his movement as the circumstances warranted. Gandhiji himself was frank enough to admit that he was not concerned with just being consistent in the literal sense of the term but was anxious that Truth must prevail at any given moment.

Dr. Pattabhi soon acquired a reputation of being a determined and ardent disciple of Gandhiji. The question was not whether his loyalty to Gandhiji did bring him any rewards. In fact, it did not, and yet if he swore by Gandhiji it only showed how deeply he was convinced of the validity of Gandhiji's programme which in his words was the bringing together into one common whole the three ideals, namely, the economic, the social and the ethical.

Whether it was village uplift or development of handicrafts or growth of the Panchayat system, Dr. Pattabhi was one with Gandhiji for he was definite that the socio-economic programme enunciated thereby was the right cure for the emancipation of India. It was this larger advocacy of Gandhiji's principles that marred the career of Dr. Pattabhi who acquired a stature consistent with other modern builders of India. He asked the question, was non-co-operation after all a fool's paradise? Was passive resistance an act of puerile obstinacy? Was Civil disobedience a leap into the unknown depths of an unfathomable abyss? Was Satyagraha itself a utopian ideal conceived by an unpractical saint who had descended into the domain of mundane politics? The answers were, of course, provided by him. He wrote prolifically on Gandhism and held the view that the nation marched on with the lode star of Non-violence as the sole guide, proving the correctness of Gandhiji's direction and asserting the certainty of the destination.

During a discussion at the Nagpur session of the Congress in

1920, Dr. Pattabhi made a spirited defence of the non-co-operation programme and two years later, at the annual session of the Andhra Committee, he, along with another Andhra stalwart Konda Venkatappayya, pledged his full support to the creed of non-co-operation. He had to fight against odds to convince the people about the significance and efficacy of the non-co-operation idea. The mass civil disobedience movement decided on by the AICC in 1921 was, however, viewed with a certain misgiving by Dr. Pattabhi who administered a mild caution against any precipitate action. He was proved correct when ultimately, on the advice of Gandhiji himself, the movement was withdrawn.

Congressmen were asked to stop all activities designed to court arrest and imprisonment and all volunteer processions and public meetings merely for the purpose of defiance of notifications. Dr. Pattabhi notes that the non-payment campaign in the Andhra Desa was a thorough success for not even five per cent of the taxes were collected so long as the Congress ban was operative.

Gandhiji's withdrawal of the civil disobedience movement was bitterly attacked by many Congress leaders and a vote of censure on him was moved by Dr. Moonje an influential member at the AICC meeting at Delhi in 1922. "Gandhiji did not permit anyone to oppose the motion of censure by speech. The storm blew over and Gandhiji like the proverbial reed remained unmoved."⁶

Dr. Pattabhi for nearly a quarter of a century was in the inner circles of the Congress Party. But he was never a persona grata as, for instance, were Nehru, Rajaji or C.R. Das though he was intellectually or otherwise no less equipped than them. He was strongly critical of the Swaraj Party and never reconciled himself to what was known as Council entry. That was because in his heart of hearts, he was essentially a Gandhite and was never tired of proclaiming the soundness of Gandhiji's philosophy.

6. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *op. cit.* *The History of the Indian National Congress*. Vol. I p. 237

The year 1922 in which the Gaya Congress was held was indeed a landmark in the party's history inasmuch as it witnessed a battle royal between those who raised politics to a "spiritual" level and those who worked politics on the "intellectual" and the "material" plane. That the leader of the former group (a reference to Gandhiji) was not present in flesh and blood at the session made no difference. His ideals of Truth and Non-violence, his philosophy of suffering and sacrifice, his religion of politics based on the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes—all these were imperfectly lispied, as Dr. Pattabhi put it, by his followers but perfectly shining forth from the aureole that surrounded his benign portrait.

The question that was uppermost in the minds of everyone and caused as much excitement as differences among the many delegates was the issue relating to the entry to the councils. There were those who felt strongly that the scheme of non-co-operation would be upset if entry into councils was permitted and they insisted that the ban on council entry should not be lifted. There were the others who would enter councils but not take seats. There was yet another group—described by Dr. Pattabhi, as the passionate politicians who would sweep the councils and make short work of cabinets and ministers, who would beared the lion in his den as it were, who would withhold supplies and more votes of censure. In effect, it was this group that aimed at creating a deadlock and bringing the government machinery to a standstill. The no-changers carried the day at Gaya.

Meanwhile, there was also the report of the committee appointed on the question of continuing civil disobedience. Among those who opposed continuance were C. R. Das, Vithalbhai Patel and Motilal Nehru. Dr. Pattabhi was, of course, a no-changer and in his view, council entry could be misconstrued by the public as a failure of the weapon of non-co-operation. M.R. Jayakar who later distinguished himself as one of India's great jurists also joined C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru in their opposition to civil disobedience.

Writes Dr. Pattabhi : "Jayakar made a great speech at the All India Congress Committee extolling incidentally my elegant diction and forceful eloquence but rejecting my plea for Gandhi's programme. I had said that the legislatures were the whirlpools, the very approach to which would mean being inevitably swept down to the bottom. I illustrated the remark by quoting how three successive elected representatives to the Madras Legislative Council were drafted by the Madras Government, one, as a judge of the Civil Court, a second, as a subordinated judge and the third, as a judge of the High Court. C.R. Das interrupted me asking with bitter sarcasm whether any were taken into the CID. I replied saying I came from South India and did not know the conditions in Bengal"⁷. That was Dr. Pattabhi.

No definite conclusions were reached at the AICC session at Calcutta since the decision was held over to the Gaya session. Dr. Pattabhi was all praise for C.R. Das inspite of his known differences with him and that was the magnanimous quality which Dr. P. Pattabhi retained all through his life. He described, for instance, C. R. Das's speech in Madras in that year as a marvellous one and him as having two precious documents in his pocket when he presided over the Gaya Congress—the Presidential address, and the other his resignation of the Presidency together with a constitution of the Swaraj Party.

At the Gaya session, C. R. Das did not want the Subjects Committee to proceed with its deliberations before he delivered his Presidential address and when this was not agreed to, he threatened to resign which he, in fact, did a couple of months later. It was not to be expected, wrote Dr. Pattabhi, that a man of Das's personality would tamely succumb to the spirit of the masses and submit to council boycott. The Swaraj Party was, therefore, organised and a programme was drawn up. It participated in the elections with the permission of the Congress. Motilal Nehru mounted guard over the Central legislature in Delhi,

7. *Speeches of Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Governor of Madhya Pradesh, Government of Madhya Pradesh, 1956 p. 305*

while C. R. Das gave battle in Calcutta in several notable fights. Dr. Pattabhi was very sad that the non-co-operation movement was shunted to the side line of legislative activities.

In the year 1923 at the annual session of the Congress at Kakinada, some of the pronounced no-changers had disappeared from the leadership of the party. C. Rajagopalachari, laments Dr. Pattabhi, cast his weight on the side of the Delhi resolution suspending all propaganda against Council entry.⁸ A new interpretation was made that non-co-operation could be effected as much from inside the councils as from outside. Dr. Pattabhi never agreed that Council entry could be regarded as a species of non-co-operation. He made an eloquent speech at the Congress session putting forth his point of view which led Vithalbhai Patel to remark that it would have been wonderful if Dr. Pattabhi entered the legislature and censured the Government, instead of censuring the changers in the Congress.

It may be remembered that the elections under the Government of India Act of 1919 were fought not on party tickets since the Congress had committed itself to non-co-operation and decided on boycotting the new constitution. The Moderates or Liberals took full advantage of the situation though they were not yet an organised party and did not set up their own candidates. Success depended largely on the position, influence and popularity of the individual candidates. Communal affiliations were also of significance. But in the second election in 1923, the Swaraj Party all over India and the Justice Party in Madras set up their men on party lines and on a specific party programme. The programme of the Swaraj Party was, of course, a negative one, namely, wrecking the constitution from within and this perhaps was the reason why it could not provoke the kind of enthusiasm that would have been generated had there been a really constructive programme. The only party in India that did so was the Justice Party in Madras.

8. *Ibid.* p. 261

In Madras, the Justice or the non-Brahmin party was formed to fight the Brahmins and challenge what they viewed as their political domination in the Presidency. The majority of the Brahmins non-co-operated in 1921. This gave their opponents an advantage. Elected in the largest number to the non-muslim seats, they formed a single majority party. Ministers were selected from the Justice Party and received full and loyal support from the followers. The party was well-organised. The Ministry informally, as there was no provision in the Act, developed the practice of following the lead of the 'Chief Minister' who was the leader of the party and selected his colleagues. On coming into power, the Ministry consolidated the position of the party by securing recognition of the claims of non-Brahmins to the public services by passing an Act to recognize the Madras University and by encouraging nascent industries. In matters of law and order, the Ministry helped the reserved side of the Government by passing a special measure to fight the non-co-operation movement. The Act democratising the constitution of the Madras City Municipal Corporation stands to the credit of the Justice Party.

The government in the province of Madras from the very beginning functioned as a unitary one, the two halves of the government holding joint meetings and deciding all questions of policy in common understanding. This was largely possible because of the solid support the Ministry had independently of the official bloc. After 1923, the presence of the Swarajists strengthened the opposition. Three years later in 1926, the Swarajists gained further strength thus becoming the largest party in the Council. Since they were not prepared to form a ministry, the Justice Party continued to retain power.

A perusal of the functioning of the Swaraj Party in the country will clearly show that while its declared objective was to wreck the constitution from within by entering the legislatures

the party finally settled down to work it except that it did not itself form the ministry. As a critic⁹ observed, Vithalbhai Patel who was elected the first non-official President of the Central Assembly helped rather than hampered the working of the constitution. And for all that, Dr. Pattabhi continued to be strongly critical of the Swaraj Party and its leaders though, at the request of Gandhiji, he became a member of the committee to sort out the relations between the Swaraj Party and the Congress. It was Dr. Pattabhi's firm view that while Gandhiji was doing everything in his power to put the Swarajists at ease and even asked the waverers to join the Swaraj Party, the response of this party to Gandhiji's gestures was not adequate. He was, therefore, highly critical of Motilal Nehru for what he called the latter's over-anxiety to regard council entry as more important than the constructive programme of the Congress. Motilal Nehru's acceptance of a seat on the Sken committee appointed by the British government greatly irritated many a Congressmen, not excluding Dr. Pattabhi. The objection to Motilal Nehru's acceptance of the membership of the Committee was, in the words of Dr. Pattabhi, not merely technical. It went deeper and the criticism was directed against the change of policy involved in such an acceptance which was tantamount to positive co-operation. This is not, however, to give the impression that Dr. Pattabhi was opposed to Motilal Nehru tooth and nail. The blunt truth was, he believed more in the efficacy and superiority of Gandhiji's programme. Thereafter, Dr. Pattabhi took upon himself the task of propagating Gandhiji's views in a manner nobody else did or could have done. He remarked elsewhere that the history of the Congress had by this time (1926) become the monotonous tale of pious resolutions at the annual sessions and perpetual strifes in the councils.¹⁰

It will be of interest to note some of the developments in the Andhra area where Dr. Pattabhi played a leading role in pro-

10. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *op. cit.*, *The History of the Indian National Congress* Vol., I, p. 307

moting Gandhiji's programme. The Andhra Provincial Congress Committee considered the question as early as in 1923 of Swarajists in the councils. A resolution was moved to the effect that the Committee, while reaffirming its faith in Gandhiji's non-co-operation programme, expresses its opinion that the Congress does not concern itself with council affairs. Dr. Pattabhi fully supported the resolution. At the same time, he was at pains to explain how the resolution passed at the Delhi Special Congress suspending all propaganda against entering the council really meant two things—namely, adherence to the principle of non-co-operation and secondly, to permit people to contest in the forthcoming election. The Delhi Congress, he said, did not commit the Congress Party to any policy in the matter of watching or guarding or even controlling the proceedings in the various legislative councils. He referred to what he called Vallabhbhai Patel's suggestion in his usual epigrammatic manner that it was time for the Swaraj Party to dissolve itself. He strongly expressed the view that the provincial Congress Committee had a right as well as a duty to take note of the developments in the Swaraj Party. His advice was, whatever be the differences among the Congressmen about getting Swaraj through Councils, they must keep the party torch burning nevertheless. In his characteristic manner, he declared that political movements have thus progressed all along; ebb and tide are periodical phases of the political wave.

There have been many acrimonious quarrels among the Andhra Congress leaders during the period between 1923 and 1927. At every meeting of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, differences of opinion were freely aired and it was said even undignified language and satire had become common. Reporting the proceedings of the Committee in May 1925, a leading newspaper carried an item which said that the quarrels had come to a head that year. Dr. Pattabhi, the brain of Andhra Desa, was not even elected as a member of the Provincial Congress Committee. The Committee however pressed the members

of East Krishna to elect him but the representative of the area did not accede to the request.

Dr. Pattabhi got into the Committee later, but this incident only brings to focus the fact that he was just not cut out to be a provincial leader where one had to resort to intrigue and manipulative politics for survival. He carried on his political activity not to please this or that person, but fully out of conviction. When the Andhra All Party Conference met in 1928 to discuss the Nehru Report, he participated in the proceedings along with many other leaders. He was one of those present at Lucknow and was a signatory to the manifesto presented by Jawaharlal Nehru.

It may be recalled in this connection that in 1927, when the Congress met in Madras under the presidency of Ansari, the Council programme and what question should be dealt with in the councils as well as the states' peoples programme claimed priority of attention. "But something happened in the Congress at Madras which is worth notice."¹¹ Jawaharlal Nehru was in the habit of paying occasional visits to England whenever the political atmosphere in India was dull and he directly came to Madras from England in December 1927 and suddenly placed before the All India Congress Committee the question of interpretation of Swaraj as complete independence having nothing to do with the British Empire. In the AICC meeting, strong opposition was set forth by Mrs. Annie Besant and in the absence of Mahatma Gandhi, the Committee passed a resolution approving this definition. The Congress creed was not altered but a supplementary resolution was passed explaining what Swaraj was.

The year 1928 marked a turn, in the words of Dr. Pattabhi, in the programme of the Congress. Motilal Nehru was called upon to preside for the second time over the session which was held at Calcutta; but before he did so, an All Parties Committee which had been originally appointed in the winter of 1927 met in 1928

1. *Speeches of Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Governor of Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh Government, 1956, p. 289*

and drew up a constitutional report, known as the Nehru Report, in answer to a challenge by Lord Birkenhead to produce a constitution if they could in the year 1925. The Report, however, was opposed by Jinnah and had to be withdrawn from the All Parties Conference in Calcutta.

In Calcutta, the struggle was between the Congress represented by Motilal and Subhash Bose who wanted to pursue a forward policy¹². The All Parties Conference held at Lucknow in 1927 and 1928 had stimulated the demand for complete independence and a manifesto had already been signed in Lucknow in that behalf. The Calcutta session was divided over the period of notice to be given to the British Government as to whether it should be one year or two—within which Britain should solve the Indian problem. “One year” and “Dominion Status” gained the day and the whole of the year 1929 was spent in preparing the country for the great fight that was ahead.

The position of those who stood for independence was that it was necessary for the nation to have a clearer view of its objective. Hitherto, the nation had never been taught to think in broad curves and wide sweeps. It had simply jogged on from step to step and from stage to stage. Dr. Pattabhi observed it was only when they had a full view and vision of their objective that they could think of the means and methods by which the objective could be achieved. Sanctions were never devised first and objective determined later. He cited the instance to Dadhabhai Naoroji who in 1906 did not pause to evolve sanctions when he expanded Swadeshi into Swaraj. In 1917, Mrs. Annie Besant did not discuss sanctions when she hoisted the flag of Home Rule. In 1920, when the Congress changed its creed, sanctions were not there. Sanctions could only be formulated upon the objective. If they were satisfied with merely good government, they would have one set of sanctions. Another set, if they wanted self-government and so on. Therefore, the charge that had been laid on those who stood for independence, namely, that they had not

12. *Ibid.*

evolved the sanctions had no validity. Dr. Pattabhi was of the view that it would be moonshine to imagine that the moment Dominion Status was achieved as under the Nehru Constitution, the Indian army would be developed in such a manner as to benefit Indians for independence. It seemed to him that the hypnosis into which the country had been dulled, from which Mrs. Besant expected they would be released by the attainment of Dominion Status, would be fostered by it than otherwise. It has been represented by Mrs. Besant that they were proclaiming independence. Dr. Pattabhi was not sure of this and gave expression to the feeling that they proclaimed that independence was their goal. Therefore, he did not see any reason why people should get agitated over the plea for supporting the Nehru Report and the decisions of the Lucknow Conference symbolising the greatest common measure of agreement. It is, therefore, clear that Dr. Pattabhi was not very happy with the Nehru Report though he could see that an outright rejection would only isolate him. He was even surprised that Gandhiji also lent his support to the Nehru Report.

In 1929, Dr. Pattabhi became a member of the Congress Working Committee—the highest policy making body of the organisation. His association with the Committee continued for nearly two decades. It was here during the deliberations of the Working Committee that he showed his mettle and impressed top leaders with his erudition and constructive approach. On one occasion, he was even deputed to go into the affairs of the Bengal Provincial Congress in which were locked J. M. Sen Gupta, Subhash Chandra Bose and Kiran Sankar Roy and others.

Dr. Pattabhi took a vigorous and dynamic role in the Salt Satyagraha in Andhra and from then on began a series of imprisonments in jails. His role in resolving the dispute in regard to the question of the National Flag is really impressive. He also served on many important committees constituted by the Congress Party such as the Fundamental Rights Committee and the Economic Programme Committee. Dr. Rajendra Prasad who became the first President of the Indian Republic and who had

intimate and close contact with Dr. Pattabhi described him as one whose knowledge and experience of the affairs of the Congress were wide. It was, therefore, not surprising that Gandhiji thought of installing Dr. Pattabhi as the President of the Congress Party but that was no easy matter either.

The presidentship of the Congress Party is certainly the most important position open to any Congressman. But the circumstances under which Gandhiji thought of nominating Dr. Pattabhi for the presidentship made the whole event not only historic but a landmark in Congress affairs. It was not as if Dr. Pattabhi himself sought this high post. Subhash Chandra Bose who presided over the annual session in 1938 had acute differences with Gandhiji and it was, therefore, not surprising that he wanted to have a man of his choice to preside over the organization.

The formation of the Forward Bloc under the leadership of Bose was perhaps the first organised attempt at internal revolt against what has been dubbed by some sections as the authoritarianism of the Congress High Command. The year 1938 was a fateful one and at the Haripura session presided over by Bose, there was great tension at the delegates' camps because of certain political developments. There were widespread reports that the ministries of both Bihar and U. P. had tendered their resignations because the two Governors would not allow political prisoners convicted of crimes of violence to be released. Dr. Pattabhi graphically described the situation in the following words. "All the perfection of arrangements at Haripura, the five hundred cows that were kept there for the milk supply of delegates, the meticulous cleanliness and the high class fare and the generous hospitality that the delegates and visitors received, all receded into the background before the all absorbing thought which events in Bihar, U.P. and Orissa necessarily forced to the front."¹³

Though only the next year Dr. Pattabhi was to be engaged in a fight for the highest position with Subhash Bose, he had no ill

13. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *op. cit.*, *The History of the Indian National Congress* Vol. II, p. 74

will or rancour against him. In the History of the Congress written by Dr. Pattabhi, he described that Subhash Bose was undoubtedly the youngest president of the Congress. "Subhash Babu was still recovering from a long illness. He comes from a province whose young men and patriots had suffered most in the annals of India, had striven most in promoting national culture and suffered most in effecting India's emancipation."¹⁴

It was in the midst of commotions and convulsions, as Dr. Pattabhi put it, that the Congress of Haripura was called upon to face its internal troubles and turmoils. The internal problem obviously related to a hitch that arose in the working of the Government of India Act of 1935. Subhash Bose, Dr. Pattabhi describes, was one of the silent presidents of the Congress considering that the occasions on which he spoke at the meetings of the Working Committee during a whole year of his presidentship could be counted on one's fingers. "While he might have had his own opinions on several matters, he did not choose," to quote Dr. Pattabhi again, "to parade them or project them into discussions."¹⁵ Not that differences between him and others were not present for, in the meanwhile, Bose made it clear by his actions that he was a man who could act on his own. The radical and the left wing forces were behind him. His unanimous election as Congress President in 1938 was itself a recognition of the influence and strength of Subhash Chandra Bose.

The real problem for the organisation arose after the Haripura session when the question was freely asked whether Subhash Bose will seek re-election. Internal commotions were sufficiently perturbing and at the end of 1938 it came to be known that Subhash Bose was keen to be the President at Tripuri in the succeeding year. Explaining the sequence, Dr. Pattabhi wrote : The desire, however, to continue to be President of the Congress in succession over two sessions need not be motivated by any particular reason. If Jawaharlal had presided thrice, that was

14. *Ibid.*, p. 75

15. *Ibid.*, p. 104

because his father, Motilalji desired it at all costs in 1929, the nation desired it at Lucknow in 1936, on his bereavement, and Gandhiji desired it at Faizpur eight months later. Few people, none in fact, could charge Jawaharlal himself with the entertainment of the desire.¹⁶

The question, therefore, according to Dr. Pattabhi virtually resolved itself into one of Gandhiji's approval. It was his initiative that had placed Subhash Bose on the *Gaddi* at Haripura. But Gandhiji instinctively felt that considering the delicate situation in the country, a Muslim of outstanding position should preside over the Congress and Maulana Azad would be the right man who can help solve the communal problem. That was why, Dr. Pattabhi says, Gandhiji did not encourage Subhash Bose's candidature.

In spite of that, his nomination was filed by his friends and Subhash Bose agreed to stand for the election. Meanwhile, the Maulana's candidature was duly announced and the Working Committee felt that his election was a foregone conclusion and would be uneventful. Gandhiji at one stage had even thought of placing "the crown of thorns" that year on Dr. Pattabhi's head if the Maulana had not agreed. Meanwhile, Maulana Azad revised his opinion and decided to withdraw. By that time, three nominations were announced, namely, that of Subhash Bose, Maulana Azad and Dr. Pattabhi, who withdrew as his prior consent was not taken.

What happened subsequently may well be described in Dr. Pattabhi's own words : "Shortly after, however, it (Dr. Pattabhi's nomination) had to be restored at the Maulana's instance as he had decided to withdraw himself and then hastening from Bombay to Bardoli announced his own withdrawal. This left the writer (Dr. Pattabhi) and Subhas Babu in the field. The contest was unintended and unexpected at least on the part of one of them. Why did the Maulana withdraw? The Maulana alone knows and

16. *Ibid.*, p. 105

Gandhi might know. Anyway there is the fact that he is a permanent resident of Calcutta and belongs to the Bengal Province. A contest with another Bengali would make it inelegant and even distasteful from more than one point of view. Again the Maulana felt that considering the tension of the times from the communal standpoint, he could render better services to the nation as other than the Chief of the Executive, than as the President of Congress. Accordingly, the Maulana was out of picture.¹⁷

The contest was, therefore, between Dr. Pattabhi who was sponsored by Gandhiji and Subhash Bose who finally succeeded by a majority of 95 votes. The reactions to the result, Dr. Pattabhi says, must naturally have been intense jubilation on the one side, and a certain surprise on the other. It was typical of Dr. Pattabhi to have remarked at the end of this agonising experience that "Subhash Babu's election manifesto had placed his own candidature on the high pedestal of a principle, not merely a personality"¹⁸, though as against this there was commendation of his own (Dr. Pattabhi) candidature and of his manifesto by nearly a half of the members of the Working Committee. Not surprisingly, Gandhiji came out with the historic statement that the defeat of Dr. Pattabhi was his own defeat. And the reaction in the country has been well described by Dr. Pattabhi in the following words : "This created consternation in the country. There was a searching of hearts, a revolution of positions. Those who had voted for Subhash Babu came out with a fresh voting of confidence in Gandhiji and Gandhiji's leadership. That created an awkward situation to be sure."¹⁹

Subhash Bose had said in a statement, "The Presidential election is wholly an affair of the delegates and should be left to them. Let the right wing who are in a decided majority in the Congress make a gesture to the left wing by accepting a leftist candidate even at this late hour²⁰." The national reaction can

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*, p. 106

20. Parthasarathy, R., *A Hundred Years of The Hindu*, p. 499

better be understood by a reference to an editorial comment in *The Hindu*. The paper said, "the Congress covers a considerable variety of opinion on socio-economic questions, representing as it does all sections of nationalists who are held together by the bond of devotion to the country and who work for the common purpose of achieving her freedom. The progressive sharpening of the anti-imperialist struggle makes it all the more necessary that the national character of the great organisation should be maintained intact whereas if Mr. Subhash Bose's ideas were to find acceptance, it would be reduced to the status of a mere party."²¹ The paper supported the candidature of Dr. Pattabhi by earnestly suggesting to Bose that it would be graceful as well as statesman-like for him to withdraw his candidature and allow Dr. Pattabhi to be unanimously elected.

However, as has been noted, Subhash Bose won the contest whereupon Gandhiji said, "I am nothing if I do not represent definite principles for which I stand". He added that the minority in the Congress if they could not keep pace with the policy of Bose must come out of the Congress. "The minority may not obstruct on any account. They must abstain if they cannot co-operate. I must remind all Congressmen that those who being Congressmen remain outside it by design represent it most. Those, therefore, who feel uncomfortable in being in the Congress may come out, not in a spirit of ill-will but with the deliberate purpose of rendering more effective service."

Subhash Bose, however, maintained that the leftists will not take the responsibility of creating a split within the Congress. If a split did come, it would come not because of them but in spite of them. He affirmed that he would try and win Gandhiji's confidence, for the simple reason that "it will be a tragic thing for me if I succeed in winning the confidence of other people but fail to win the confidence of India's greatest man."²² Dr. Pattabhi did not utter a word. He, however, remarked in his monumental

21. *Ibid.*, p. 500

22. *Ibid.*

work that the whole thing created a situation altogether unenviable for the newly elected President who was returned by a majority of the delegates, but was in a minority in the AICC. Dr. Pattabhi was even sorry that the illness of Subhas Bose should have prevented him from figuring in the grand presidential procession at Tripuri that had been arranged with a chariot drawn by 52 elephants.

The defeat of Dr. Pattabhi led to a big crisis in Congress affairs and, therefore, deserves to be dealt with in some detail. The question that was uppermost in the minds of many leaders was if Gandhi's leadership should be reaffirmed, how would it fit in with the presidentship of one whose election was not only contrary to his wishes but to his principles and policies and was declared to be a defeat for himself.

Dr. Pattabhi wondered whether it would be possible at Tripuri for Gandhi to select the members of the Working Committee as had been the practice for well nigh two decades. There was no bitterness in Dr. Pattabhi in spite of the fact that he was humbled at the election. He, more than any one else was worried about the possible outcome of this defiance by Subhash Bose. And as could only be expected, Congress affairs reached a deadlock. Subhash Bose did not announce the personnel of the new Working Committee. A Congress without a Working Committee, Dr. Pattabhi observed, was like an organism without hands and legs. An organisation without an executive was as good as non-existing.

This situation was brought about following the resignation en bloc of all the members of the Committee except Subhash Bose and Sarat Bose. They also indicated that they would not be available for renomination during the term of Subhash Bose. The general feeling then was that the decision to withdraw by Nehru and others from the Working Committee was too strong a dose for Bose and that the latter would realise the gravity of the situation.

In a joint letter of resignation, they said : "We feel the time has come when the country should have a clear cut policy, not based on compromise between different incompatible groups of the Congress. It is but right, therefore, that you should select a homogeneous cabinet representing the views of the majority. You must trust us to give you all possible co-operation in matters where we see eye to eye with you in the policies that you may put before the country."²³

Gandhiji being the undisputed leader with a tremendous popular backing, it was not unexpected that Dr. Pattabhi's defeat at the hands of Subhash Bose led to despair among large sections of Congressmen. This was amply reflected in the editorial views of some leading dailies one of which *The Hindu* said the decision to force a contest for the presidentship was not taken from broad considerations of national leadership but was actuated by the motive of sectional advantage or personal prestige. It was even suggested at one stage that Subhash Bose should seek a vote of confidence since as many as 13 members of his Working Committee had resigned.

Matters came to a head when the Subjects Committee of the Tripuri Congress adopted in March 1939 by 218 votes to 135 Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant's resolution expressing confidence in Gandhiji and calling for adherence to the present policies of the Congress. The Tripuri session thus made it clear that Gandhiji's leadership and moral authority remained as unshaken as before.

When Bose asked Gandhiji to suggest names to the Working Committee, he did not respond favourably observing in a letter to him that "knowing your views and knowing how you and most of the members differ in fundamentals, it seems to me that if I give you names, it would be an imposition on you. You are free to choose your own Committee". The failure to reach an agreement with Gandhiji on the composition of the Working Committee left no option for Subhash Bose but to resign from the presidentship.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 501

Thus ended a fateful chapter in Congress affairs in which the main figure was Dr. Pattabhi. The circumstances under which Subhash Babu tendered his resignation, said the Congress bulletin dated July 9, 1939, were not unprecedented. It will be remembered that C.R. Das had likewise tendered his resignation soon after the Gaya session in 1922. The analogy may not go on all fours, for C.R. Das's second election to presidentship in Gaya was an unanimous one. In neither case was the resignation the result of mere disgust but was the prelude to an organised campaign against the decisions against which their respective resignations stood as a protest.

Subhash Bose took up cudgels at once and when the AICC met once again in June in Bombay, two decisions that were taken at it became the subject of acute controversy. The next session was held at Ramgarh and though Dr. Pattabhi described that Maulana Azad was elected president as a matter of course, it should really have been his turn. But that was not to be. Was Dr. Pattabhi disappointed? The answer to this is given by him in the History of the Congress when he wrote: "He was to have been the 'official' candidate, so to put it,—for Tripuri but . . . he withdrew of his own accord. And it was but natural that his name should have been thought of at the earliest opportunity that presented itself next. Thus it was that the Ramgarh session came to be presided over by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad."²⁴

There were, however, reports that Gandhiji hoped that the Maulana would not give his consent to his name being proposed for the presidentship and he felt disappointed that what he expected did not come to pass. Dr. Pattabhi who was also dropped from the Working Committee formed by Maulana Azad had to wait till 1948 to become the President of the Congress.

It was in the years 1940-1942 that Gandhiji stepped up the campaign, non-violent though, to obtain freedom. The first

24. Sitaramayya, B., Pattabhi, *op. cit.*, *The History of the Indian National Congress* Vol. II, p. 166

significant measure was the individual Satyagraha of which Vinoba Bhave was the hero. The movement created a great sensation all over the country and every Congress leader that mattered was put behind prison bars. Gandhiji had instructed that while offering Satyagraha, there should be no anger or even a threat of violence. If on the other hand, violence was used to make the Congressmen yield, they should not waver. He said that the Britishers might crush Germany, not the Congress.

The next important landmark in the freedom struggle was the Quit India Movement of 1942. That was the year in which Dr. Pattabhi was restored to the Working Committee. Meanwhile, the Cripps Mission had come and gone and Gandhiji decided that a more aggressive civil disobedience movement should be launched to secure the effective withdrawal of the British from India. At the fateful session of the All India Congress Committee on August 7 and 8, 1942 in Bombay, it was resolved that Britain was no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian government "which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity". The Committee resolved, therefore, to sanction vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale. Such a struggle, it was declared, must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji. The Committee requested Gandhiji to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

The AICC resolution was moved by Pandit Nehru and seconded by Sardar Patel. What happened subsequently is part of history. All the prominent leaders, including Dr. Pattabhi, were jailed overnight. Meanwhile, Gandhiji's message of do or die caught up the imagination of the people. Throughout, Dr. Pattabhi remained an ardent and enthusiastic supporter of Gandhiji so much so that there came to be what was called a Gandhi's group comprising, besides Dr. Pattabhi, Sardar Patel, Dr.

Rajendra Prasad, Shankar Rao Deo, J. B. Kripalani and P. C. Ghosh.

Dr. Pattabhi addressed a meeting of the Andhra Congress workers to explain to them the various items of the proposed civil disobedience campaign. He told the workers that the coming campaign might be the last fight for freedom of the Congress indicating, however, that the mass movement was not going to be limited to Congressmen alone. Anticipating what was going to happen, he appealed to the workers to be ready to continue the movement when the leaders were taken to jail. He made the speech a few days before the AICC meeting and, therefore, he made it clear that he had instructions from the Working Committee to prepare the people for the ensuing campaign. It would be of interest to know that in a secret evidence on the 1942-1943 events collated by the Government of India, Dr. Pattabhi was described as a close confidant of Gandhiji who had always been prepared "slavishly" to follow Gandhiji's wishes.

Dr. Pattabhi continued to play the role of an adviser to Gandhiji in the years after the release of the Congress leaders at the conclusion of the Second World War and during the various missions that had come to India for negotiating and settling the country's future following the assumption of office by the Labour Government in Britain under the leadership of Clement Attlee. The grant of independence to India without so much as a bloody fight is indeed an achievement. The Congress Party's spirited role in this task too is significant. Then came the Constituent Assembly to frame a Constitution for Free India.

Dr. Pattabhi actively participated in the framing of India's Constitution. He was elected as a member of the Constituent Assembly from the Province of Madras. He was appointed to several of the committees set up by the Assembly to study the establishment of a new Constitution. The report of the Union Constitution Committee was considered by the Constituent Assembly at its session in July 1947. During the consideration

of the report relating to directly administered areas, Deshbandhu Gupta moved an amendment for the appointment of a committee "to suggest suitable changes to be brought about in the administrative systems of Chief Commissioners' Provinces so as to accord with the then changed conditions in the country and to give them their due place in the democratic conditions of free India."²⁵ The amendment was unanimously adopted by the Assembly.

The President of the Constituent Assembly appointed a committee in pursuance of the amendment. When the question came up as to who should be the Chairman of this important committee, the obvious choice fell on Dr. Pattabhi. Dr. Rajendra Prasad had the fullest confidence in him and the speed and promptness with which Dr. Pattabhi submitted the report was but an indication of the earnestness with which he undertook this difficult task.

In fact, one of the members of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution, N. Gopalaswamy Iyengar, submitted a memorandum on the future constitution of the Chief Commissioners' provinces. It was largely because of the political temperament of Dr. Pattabhi that the committee adopted broadly the principles of responsible government as the basis of the constitution of these provinces, though in respect of the major ones some modifications were suggested. In respect of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which had ceased to be penal settlements, Dr. Pattabhi was anxious that they should continue to be administered by the Government of India. The committee endorsed this plea.

Generally, however, the principle suggested was that the Centre must have a special responsibility for the good government and the financial solvency of these areas. In regard to Coorg, Ajmer, Merwara and Delhi, the committee wanted them

25. Shiva Rao, B., *The Framing of India's Constitution : A Study*, p. 560.

to function under a Lieutenant Governor. Elected legislatures were also suggested. Meanwhile, a plea was made in a note by some of the members of the committee pressing upon the Constituent Assembly the urgency of incorporating a suitable provision making it possible for each of these areas to join the contiguous unit. This has been largely accomplished in the years to follow.

When the draft constitution was published and circulated for eliciting public opinion, a number of comments and suggestions for amending the draft articles 5 and 6 relating to citizenship were received. Dr. Pattabhi suggested two amendments to Article 5. The first sought to replace the words "Permanent abode" in clause (a) by the word "domicile" and to change the date, "first day of April 1947" to "fifteenth day of February 1947".*

The second amendment by Dr. Pattabhi proposed the removal of all restrictions like the depositing of a declaration in the office of the district magistrate envisaged in clause (ii) of the explanation and the entitlement to Indian domicile of every displaced person from Pakistan who migrated to India after April 1, 1947. Similarly when the Fundamental Rights Chapter was being discussed, Dr. Pattabhi keenly participated in it and had suggested an amendment though ultimately it did not find acceptance.

The question of *habeas corpus* also figured prominently during the discussions on the Fundamental Rights chapter of the draft Constitution. Article 25 of the draft as settled by the committee said that the right to move the Supreme Court by appropriate proceedings for the enforcement of any of the rights conferred by this part is guaranteed. Clause 3 of this Article read : "Parliament may by law empower any other court to

*The original clause (a) read : every person who or either of whose parents or any of whose grand parents were born in the territory of India as defined in the constitution and who has not made his permanent abode in any Foreign State after the **first** day of April 1947.....shall be a citizen of India etc.

exercise within the local limits of its jurisdiction all or any of the powers exercisable by the Supreme Court under Clause 2 of this Article.” Dr. Pattabhi suggested the insertion at the beginning of Clause (3) of the words “without prejudice to the powers of the Supreme Court under Clause (2) of this Article”. The object of the amendment was to make it clear beyond all doubt that the Supreme Court’s power to issue writs for the enforcement of fundamental rights would not be affected by any law that Parliament might make for conferring similar powers on any other court.

B.N. Rau, Constitutional Adviser, remarked that there could be no objection to Dr. Pattabhi’s amendment. Several others too suggested some more amendments, and after considering all of them, the Drafting Committee decided to accept, only one of them—that moved by Dr. Pattabhi. When the draft Article 25 came up for consideration in the Constituent Assembly on December 9, 1948, this amendment was moved by Dr. Ambedkar in a slightly modified form so as to leave no doubt that the conferment of powers to issue writs on other courts would be without prejudice to the powers vested in the Supreme Court.

Dr. Pattabhi’s contribution to constitution-making has thus been impressive. He was a member of the Provincial Constitution Committee which considered among other things, the issue relating to second chambers. Dr. Pattabhi was on a sub-committee along with such stalwarts as B. G. Kher, P. Subbarayan and K. N. Katju which discussed the composition of the second chamber for States where it was desired. The sub-committee recommended that the numerical strength of the second chamber in a State should not be more than a quarter of the strength of the Legislative Assembly and that there should be, within certain limits, functional representation on the Irish model. The composition of the second chambers should accordingly be as follows : One half to be elected on functional representation; one third to be elected by the Legislative Assembly of the State by the method of proportional representation and one-sixth to

be nominated by the Government on the advice of his cabinet. The minimum age of a member was fixed at 35.

These proposals were accepted by the Provincial Constitution Committee. It would be interesting to note that the whole matter was the subject of animated discussion in the Constituent Assembly for three days in July 1947 and the proposals were adopted with minor amendments.

The Union Powers Committee of the Constituent Assembly received various suggestions for the assignment of certain items to one or the other of the three lists of powers. One suggestion came from Dr. Pattabhi who as a member of that committee, pleaded strongly for the concurrent jurisdiction in broadcasting. He held the view that the position in regard to the subject under Section 129 of the Government of India Act of 1935 was "most unhappy" as the Central Government had absolute power over the subject. He urged that, in view of the importance of broadcasting for various nation-building activities, such as rural uplift and rural education which were primarily the responsibility of the units, it was essential that there should be a provincial (or State) sphere in broadcasting.

By far the most significant recognition of his services came when he was elected, belatedly though, President of the Indian National Congress in 1948. By then, however the party had lost the prime position it was enjoying in the pre-Independence days. Nehru as the Prime Minister was the only person who mattered. All policy matters were decided by him and, as one critic put it, the chief of the party had little discretion in laying down directives.

In his presidential address at the Jaipur session Dr. Pattabhi touched upon several subjects which were then agitating the public mind. On linguistic provinces, he prefaced his remarks by saying that there is yet another problem awaiting solution by one who can think in broad sweeps and wide curves. Leaving alone the dismembered fragments that have seceded, India

today stands as a single united federation composed of States and Provinces which will be placed in together to form a new Indian Union on a federal basis. Only the units must be provided with suitable opportunities of marshalling all available resources by their own genius. Such a genius is inborn and rests in the unsophisticated masses of the country who, though illiterate could speak and administer. Again such a genius can only express itself in the mother-tongue of the people which is often the regional language of the province. Hence the need to carve out institutions which transact all their internal affairs through the regional language. This is the rationale of redistribution of India into linguistic provinces.”²⁶

Referring to what he called an allied problem, namely that of the Chief Commissioners’ provinces which demanded that the benefits of democracy should be fully extended to them he pointed to the recommendations by the committee of the Constituent Assembly and said they could not be treated as Cinderellas of a new home. Ajmer, for instance, should be absorbed into Rajasthan; Coorg must join one of its neighbours in accordance with the wishes of its inhabitants. Delhi may well be made a Lieutenant Governor’s province. “The problem of a State cannot be arranged in a queue, each one to take its turn in the omnibus of national progress. The French and Goan territories have to be recovered; the States have to be absorbed. Shall one of them wait till the other is completed? A bad thing cannot be made good by mere waiting”.²⁷ These indeed were prophetic words.

The main theme of his address was social justice. He said, “Our task is to replace the structure of our crumbling society by a live social headship through renovated public opinion and a rehabilitated social law duly enacted by the legislatures in consultation as much with the progressive forces of the day as

26. *The Hindu*, 20 December, 1948

27. *Ibid.*

with the conservative elements that still survive the onslaughts of the West.²⁸

He said a government must govern and was, therefore, concerned with the problems of the day. Its work was concrete; its solutions must be immediate. The Congress had a wider jurisdiction and a more remote task of co-ordinating through a dispassionate criticism of the achievements of the past, the endeavours of the present and the anticipations of the future. The Congress was really the philosopher while the Government was the politician, the latter had power and the former the influence. He made a vigorous plea for progressive nationalisation of land and of select key industries, food and clothing and housing for all, universal education and facilities for medicament "so that our Swaraj may fill the pride of the common man equally with the uncommon". In fact his whole address was a masterpiece of English prose, full of ideas and observations that are of extreme current validity.

Dr. Pattabhi, however, did not enjoy any position worthy of his political career after he ceased to be the Congress President. He became a member of the Rajya Sabha though he personally felt that he was not cut out to be a parliamentarian. Maulana Azad who had a soft corner for Dr. Pattabhi would have liked to have him as Vice-President. But that was not to be since the Prime Minister had set his eyes on Dr. Radhakrishnan who, like Dr. Pattabhi, was an Andhra, though not a politician. Nor was Nehru anxious to take Dr. Pattabhi into his cabinet. As one of the biographers of Dr. Pattabhi put it, Azad and Ravi Shankar Shukla pleaded with Nehru to make Dr. Pattabhi at least a Governor.²⁹ That Nehru finally consented to do. However, he wrote to Dr. Pattabhi that the normal term of a Governor was supposed to be five years. "That is rather a long time in a fast changing world. In some cases therefore, we are for the present fixing a term of two years

28. *Ibid.*

29. Prasanna Kumar, A., *Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya op. cit.*, p. 188

for the appointment. At the end of the period, the matter can be reconsidered. I propose that your appointment should be for the term of two years".³⁰

Dr. Pattabhi accepted the offer and became the Governor of Madhya Pradesh, but he was not very happy about the conditions. And yet he gracefully acknowledged that "the appointment does not matter particularly to one who is presently finishing his three score and ten". At the end of two years, both the President Dr. Rajendra Prasad and the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh urged Nehru to continue Dr. Pattabhi for the full term of five years. Nehru agreed though he tried to change this decision in 1956 when there was a wholesale reorganisation of States on a linguistic basis.³¹ The Prime Minister was, however, cautioned by Dr. Pattabhi who, while willing to give up the post, said it would be in the fitness of things that the administration is free from "arbitrary decision" in respect of what he described as a "big office in the State".³² That perhaps had the desired effect and he relinquished office only at the end of five years in 1957.

It is not very clear as to why Dr. Pattabhi, who from the very beginning of his political career had distinguished himself in whatever task he undertook should have been treated with such indifference. Is it because he was a known right-winger? Is it because he was close to leaders who had differences with Nehru, as, for instance, Rajendra Prasad? All these questions have to remain unanswered in the absence of any positive proof to show that Nehru had a particular dislike for Dr. Pattabhi. Yet the sad fact was that this eminent son of India—the man who chronicled the history of the Congress in a manner no other person could have done was denied the honours that rightly belonged to him and which much lesser persons enjoyed.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 190

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*, p. 192

Freedom Struggle in the Princely States

DR. PATTABHI will be remembered in history for his outstanding contribution to the prolonged people's struggle for freedom in the Indian Princely States which culminated into their merger with free India.

It is now a well-known fact that Sardar Patel who was handling the question of the merger of the Princely States in the Indian Union was responsible for what has been rightly described as the world's biggest bloodless revolution. While, no doubt, full credit should go to Sardar Patel for accomplishing the gigantic task, it should not be forgotten that Dr. Pattabhi was almost the first national leader to have roused people in these States with, of course, the co-operation of the local leaders. The Princes whom the British had left behind as independent would perhaps not have easily surrendered to the Indian Union. As president of the States People's Conference, Dr. Pattabhi played no mean role in creating an urge among the people of what were called the native States to obtain freedom as much as the people living in the British provinces desired.

The long history of the Princes in India will clearly reveal how autocratic they were. "In many respects", wrote *The Hindu* as early as in 1887, "they the Princes were inferior to their ancestors.... The native rulers of the modern type are generally incompetent men.... They have been spoiled by a

worthless education....and while as unwilling as all rulers are to part with power they generally degrade themselves into tools of their favourites....They care little for the opinion of their countrymen....".¹ The Princes never bothered to undertake to reduce their own powers and privileges and willingly share them with others. This was one important reason which was behind the demand in certain sections that the Government of India should intervene to redeem the subjects of the rulers from the depth of ignorance and servitude in which they were sunk. The demand that the Indian National Congress should have its salutary influence on the administration of native States is as old as the party itself. And yet the Congress did not intervene effectively enough in regard to the problems of the people living in these States.

Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Shastri was constrained to observe in 1926 that for a long time, the Congress had left the Indian States severely alone. "Never bring native States into our discussions, we used to say to ourselves. So rigidly did we carry our abstinence in these matters that for a long time we did not allow any subjects of Indian States to be Congressmen".² He asked that if responsible Government was going to be introduced in British India, how long were the subjects of the Indian States going to remain in a comparatively unevolved system. He was for the elimination of the personal rule howsoever benevolent its nature. Soon after, the feeling began to grow among the leaders that the Indian Princes should instead of merely seeking to isolate themselves in obscure and dubious safety, make their governments rest on the solid rock of people's contentment which is possible only when they bring about fully responsible governments.

Actually the Princes and their future were highlighted by the Report of the Butler Committee in 1929. One of the

1. Parthasarathy, R., *A, Hundred Years of The Hindu*, p. 99

2. *Ibid.*, p. 343

main recommendations of the Butler Committee was to continue paramountcy of the British power, which was to be left free to meet unforeseen circumstances. It proclaimed its dictum that paramountcy was to remain paramount in order to fulfil its obligations arising out of Imperial necessity. Secondly, the Committee said that the Viceroy and not the Governor-General-in-Council should be the agent of the Crown in its relations with the Princes. The obvious reason for their recommendation was to provide an insulation for the Princely States from a future democratic Central Government. The Committee refused to give a hearing to the States people on the ground that their terms of reference did not envisage an investigation of their grievances, real or otherwise. Worse was the fact that the Committee made a derogatory reference in its report to the States' People's Association by such epithet as "persons purporting to represent them", thereby questioning the very bona fides of this organisation. The Report came under bitter attack by nationalists all over the country. Typical of this opinion was expressed by an editorial in *The Hindu* in the following words : "We in British India are conscious and confident of our destiny. If the Princes are wise they will take no step now which does not reckon this possibility. They may defy just popular wishes now; if they do so let them remember defeat awaits them sooner or later. They cannot without peril to their economic and other vital interests adopt the policy of inglorious isolation which the Butler report contemplates for them, nor could they forget that they could not even if they wish carry their subjects with them in this policy of national self-effacement and suicide".³ Even *The Manchester Guardian* which was closely following the Indian events said, "We entered into certain engagements with you because of our position as rulers of British India. The time is coming when we must hand over the rule of British India to its inhabitants. We give you notice now so that you may make new engagements with our successors. We will help

3. *Ibid.*, p. 374

you as far as we can to get fair terms but your future must depend chiefly on your success in securing the goodwill of your subjects.”⁴

The alternative before the Princes was either subordination which would be virtual slavery or equality. Equality could be secured only by seeking a place in the Indian Constitution. But the Princes had a different approach and they did not concern themselves with associating the people at all in the many rounds of discussions they had about their future. Curiously, the Nehru Report by making the emphatic pronouncement that an Indian State was to be taken as meaning the individual ruling Prince of the State concerned, helped not a little in the contention of the British that the rulers and their accredited delegates were the only ones entitled to negotiating on behalf of the States.

It was, therefore, not surprising that at the Round Table Conference in 1929 the people of the Indian States were denied representation. The Congress also did not do anything, beyond expressing sympathy, to involve the people of the States in the freedom struggle. Even in respect of the Round Table conference, the Congress, except for a casual enquiry through Vithalbhai Patel of Lord Irwin whether the subjects of the States would be represented, had exhibited no stronger a view. It was in this context that an influential deputation consisting of M. Ramachandra Rao, G. R. Abhyankar and two others went to Britain in October 1928 to create opinion there on the problem of the Indian States though, of course, they were fully aware that at home they needed the support of the Congress. It was suggested by Mr Abhyankar that Ramachandra Rao be co-opted even at that stage to give the States' peoples case. However, the Round Table Conference was held without a delegate representing the States' people. Another effort made by the Indian States Peoples Conference before the Second Round Table Conference at obtaining representation when Lord

4. *Ibid.*

Snell was asked to use his influence towards this purpose again failed. All this only added to the cleavage between the rulers and the people and the consistent indifference shown by the British in denying any recognition to the ISPC further widened the rift.

What is important to note is that the Indian National Congress set for itself some limits beyond which it did not like to go to fight for the rights of the people in the States. For instance, the Congress session in Calcutta in December 1928 urged not only the introduction of responsible Government based on representative institutions in the States, but also exhorted the States administrations to issue immediate proclamations or enact laws guaranteeing elementary and fundamental rights of citizenship to the people. When Jawaharlal Nehru became the Congress President, he mounted an attack on the Princes by describing them as the most curious relics of a bygone age. But he felt the Congress could not go beyond that.

The resolutions passed by the Congress in the subsequent years till 1935 did not reveal any intention of involving itself (Congress Party) in the affairs of the States. The States' people were greatly agitated over the Congress policy. Even Gandhiji did not seem to actively support the demand for Congress intervention in the States' people struggle. Actually, a deputation of the ISPC waited on Gandhiji and submitted a memorandum urging elected representation for the States in any scheme of a Constituent Assembly that the Congress itself was demanding.

However, Gandhiji beyond stating that the Princes should change their attitude did not hold out any promise. On the other hand, he described the Indian Princely States as independent entities under the British law where "the Congress had not more power to shape the policy of the States than it had that of Afghanistan". Gandhiji explained that the Congress policies were not determined by any lack of appreciation or will on its

part but a conviction that any attempt on the part of the Congress at interference will only damage the cause of the people in the States. He remarked that "the agitation for democratic institutions should sprout from the soil itself and not be transplanted from outside."⁵

The ISPC, in the circumstances, felt bitterly aggrieved which brought it into confrontation with the Indian National Congress. A. V. Patwardhan who presided over the ISPC Working Committee criticised Gandhiji for being evasive. The rise of the Socialist Party during 1933-34 within the Congress brought to sharp focus the differences on the question of support to the States' people.

The new policy as defined by the Congress in its resolution in 1935 that the people of the Indian States had an inherent right to Swaraj no less than the people of British India somewhat assuaged the ruffled feelings of the former. Even so, the fact that the Working Committee resolution did not go the whole hog disappointed them. The seriousness with which the Socialists took up the cause created a new situation under which the activities of the people of the Princely States became a subject of deep discussion at all Congress meetings.

It would be useful in this context to recall the resolution of the Congress Working Committee in 1935 on the future of the Indian States and its people. For the States' Peoples Organisation was somewhat agitated over the opinion of Bhulabhai Desai, the leader of the Parliamentary Board, which he gave in his professional capacity to the Princes of India on the federation issue. In July of that year, there was a demand for a meeting of the All India Congress Committee to consider that attitude of the Congress towards the rights of the people of the Indian States in the context of Gandhiji's utterance at the Second Round Table Conference, namely, that "the Congress

5. Prasanna Kumar, A., *Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : A Political Study*
p. 198

is not going to be satisfied with any constitution which does not provide for the fundamental rights of citizenship for the States' people with a right of representation on the federal legislature".

The aforesaid resolution of the Working Committee on the subject said :

"Although the policy of the Congress regarding the States in India has been defined in its resolutions, a persistent effort is being made by or on behalf of the people of the States to get a fuller declaration of the Congress policy. The Working Committee therefore issues the following statement concerning the policy of the Congress with regard to the Princes and the people of the States.

"The Indian National Congress recognises that the people in the Indian States have an inherent right to Swaraj no less than the people of British India. It has accordingly declared itself in favour of the establishment of representative Responsible Government in the States and has in that behalf not only appealed to the Princes to establish such Responsible Government in their States and to guarantee fundamental rights of citizenship, like freedom of person, speech, association and the Press to their people but has also pledged to the States' people its sympathy and support in their legitimate and peaceful struggle for the attainment of full responsible Government. By that declaration and by that pledge, the Congress stands. The Congress feels that even in their own interests the Princes will be well advised to establish at the earliest possible moment full Responsible Government within their States, carrying a guarantee of full rights of citizenship of their people.

"It should be understood, however, that the responsibility and the burden of carrying on that struggle within the States must necessarily fall on the States' people themselves. The Congress can exercise moral and friendly influence upon

the States, and this it is bound to do wherever possible. The Congress has no other power under existing circumstances, although the people of India, whether under the British, the Princes or any other power, are geographically and historically one and indivisible.

"In the heart of controversy, the limitation of the Congress is often forgotten. Indeed, any other policy will defeat the common purpose.

"With regard to the impending constitutional changes, it has been suggested that the Congress should insist upon certain amendments of that portion of the Government of India Bill which deals with the relation of the Indian States to the Indian Federation. The Congress has more than once categorically rejected the entire Scheme of Constitutional Reforms on the broad ground of its not being an expression of the will of the people of India and has insisted on a Constitution to be framed by a Constituent Assembly. It may not now ask for an amendment of the Scheme in any particular part. To do so would amount to a reversal of the Congress policy.

"At the same time, it is hardly necessary to assure the people of the States that the Congress will never be guilty of sacrificing their interests in order to buy the support of the Princes. From its inception, the Congress has stood unequivocally for the rights of the masses of India as against the vested rights in conflict with their true interest."⁶

Having thus laid down the policy, the Congress however seemed to have done some rethinking. This is evident from the fact that at its Lucknow session in 1936 it proclaimed that in its opinion, the people of the Indian States should have the same right of self-determination as those of the rest of India and the Congress stood for the same political, social and democratic liberties for every part of India.

6. Sitaramayya B. Pattabhi, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 605

Thanks to the new reiteration, a feeling arose that a more congenial relationship was in the offing between the Indian National Congress and the people of the Indian States and this culminated in the emergence of the All India States' Peoples Conference and Dr. Pattabhai became its President at the Karachi session in 1936.

Dr. Pratabhi was quick to realize that the States' Peoples Conference could be turned into a dynamic organisation for bringing about radical changes in the status of the people living therein. There were, no doubt, constitutional bodies in the Indian States such as legislative assemblies and councils and other popular organisations indicating the signs of a new awakening. In States like Baroda, Travancore, Mysore and Cochin to mention only a few, resolutions had already been moved in the councils and other organisations and passed demanding for the people of the States a measure of self-government in keeping with the awakening of the people. But the response was as tardy as it was ungenerous.

Dr. Pratabhi directed his main effort to making the States' Peoples Conference follow the policies, programmes and ideals the Congress had set for itself. For the first time, he enunciated in no uncertain terms that it should be the equal concern of the Congress to secure the internal autonomy of the States as much as that of the British Indian provinces. In other words, he was anxious that the Congress should be national in every sense of the term and strive for the liberation of the States.

He thus prepared the ground for what ultimately resulted in the closest co-operation between the Indian National Congress and the States' Peoples Conference which helped to end the confrontation between the two organisations.

In fact, the lack of adequate support from the Congress to the people in the States was even described by the popular leaders of the Indian States as obstructionist and they wondered why the Congress which was fighting for self-determination should

be so callous towards their aspirations. Of course, Gandhiji felt that it was only the conversion of rulers, through peaceful means, which could bring about reforms, and not by force and agitations. Unless the paramount power was removed there was little chance of the people realising their ideal through pressure and Gandhiji believed it would be a wasted endeavour to carry on an agitation.

It was due to the dynamic leadership of Dr. Pattabhi that a change in Congress policy vis-a-vis the people of the States was brought about and even Gandhiji agreed that the Congress should give active support to them. Gandhiji argued that conditions had changed in the States and, therefore, it called for a new policy.

The Haripura session of the Congress was indeed a landmark in the freedom movement in the Indian States. Dr. Pattabhi observed that the States' Peoples Conference and the Indian National Congress had been running on parallel or even divergent lines. They had been suspecting each other—the Congress that the States' people were trying to exploit the name of the Congress, and the States' people that the Congress was not assisting them and that they were even on better friendly terms with the Princes than the people themselves. Dr. Pattabhi, ever since he took over the leadership of AISPC, worked to eliminate this mutual suspicion.

The close affinity between the Congress and the AISPC was further exhibited at the Navsari Convention in 1938 under the presidentship of Dr. Pattabhi. It was held a little before the Haripura Congress session. It was here that Dr. Pattabhi appealed to the Princes to take their people into confidence. In doing so, he called on the States' people to develop self-reliance. He clarified that when the Congress talked of *Purna Swaraj*, it included the Indian States as well which in any scheme of federation will participate as free units enjoying the measure of democratic freedom as the British provinces. Speaking on the draft resolution which Dr. Pattabhi

himself initiated, he urged that the Congress should whole-heartedly help the people of the Indian States. He said the British Government had no right to support any ruler who was denying to his own people the very rights which were prevalent in British India.

The Navsari Convention proved that the struggle for responsible Government in the States was assuming large dimensions in the general context of the freedom movement in India. The convention made a remarkable impression on the States' people and the Congress, and was hailed as a good exercise in political organisation and formulation of public opinion. It goes again to the credit of Dr. Pattabhi entirely that the Navsari resolution was accepted by the Congress as an official resolution at the Haripura session.

Dr. Pattabhi raised the issue relating to the Indian States at the Congress Working Committee meeting at Wardha prior to the annual session, where he pleaded for recognition to the Congress committees in the States which will work under the supervision of the Congress Working Committee. The Haripura session endorsed this plea though some senior Congressmen were not in full agreement with this course of action.

The Haripura session was a triumph for Dr. Pattabhi. For it was here that a comradeship between the Congress and the AISPC was achieved. It was at this session that Subhash Bose, in his presidential address, hailed the unprecedented awakening of the people of the Indian States and pleaded for a revision of the Congress attitude towards the States.

The elaborate description of the handling of the Indian States' problem at the Haripura Congress by Dr. Pattabhi in his History of the Congress needs to be reproduced so as to enable an appreciation of the whole matter in perspective. He wrote in his inimitable style the entire sequence thus :

"It will be remembered that a section of the Congress and Gandhiji did not see eye to eye on the problem of the States and the attitude of the Congress towards the political

awakening in them. So early as in 1934 when Gandhi published a statement on the 6th of April, he made a reference to Socialism and the States as well as the constitution of the Congress as the points on which he had his distinctive views in opposition to those entertained by one wing of the Congress. Part of the difficulty arose from the fact that the people of the States were believed to be demanding external aid for internal agitation. They soon put their house in order and organised their committees and met in an All India Conference in July 1936 at Karachi. This was the beginning of a new chapter in the progress of the States' peoples policies on lines closely analogous to those adopted by the Congress. Associations sprang up everywhere and many of them were affiliated to the All-India body. The Praja Mandals of certain States preferred to remain unconnected with outside organisations of States' Peoples much less with the Congress organisation. In some States, there were Congress Committees side by side with States' Peoples Organisations. Really the people of the States were in a difficulty. Their passion for the Congress was as unreserved as it was sincere. But they had to contend against their own Governments in the States which did not countenance the formation of alliances with the Congress organisation. The Princes of some States had objection even to the States' Peoples Associations. Although the Congress had up till 1921 a constitution which did not permit of the formation of Congress Committees in the States still, since the Calcutta session in 1928, a new chapter began.

"Having gained an inch in Calcutta, the people of the States aspired to an ell in later years. They wanted the Congress to bear the burden of the people in the States or at any rate take the responsibility for the political organisations of the States' Peoples. The Congress on the contrary had its own difficulties to contend against. If an embargo was placed on the primary membership of the States' People in

Congress Committees outside the State, that was only a matter between the individual and the State. But if regular committees were formed with a whole hierarchy of them from bottom to top affiliated to the great Indian National Congress, observing its constitution, obeying the orders and acting up to its resolutions, any conflict between the local committees in the States and the State Durbars would become a vital and immediate concern as much of the Congress organisations as a whole, as of the people in the States.

Thus would the Congress be embroiling itself with local vagaries and idiosyncrasies of a variety of States, 562 in number, a task obviously beyond the pale of practical politics of the Congress. The issue then that arose at Haripura was whether Congress committees should be permitted in the States and whether the Congress constitution of India's Provinces should not be equally acceptable to the people of the States. An easy way out of the difficulty was considered by the States' Peoples Organisation which had just met at convention at Navsari, prior to the Haripura Session, to be taken to make one change in the Article 1 of the Constitution by stating that India means the *people of India* including the people of the Indian States. In order to prove the bonafides of the Congress in respect of their sympathies for the people of the States and to reassure them of the helpful attitude of the Congress towards them it was suggested that a committee of the A.I.C.C. be set up to investigate the conditions of the States' People in special relation to civil liberties and constitutional development, agrarian conditions and states' monopolies of trade in selected States in India and that a report be submitted to the Congress before the next session.

"It will also be remembered that the resolution on Mysore passed by the A.I.C.C. in Calcutta in October 1937 did not commend itself to Gandhi who criticised it in severe

terms nor to Jawaharlal Nehru though as President he allowed its introduction and the resolution was passed under his chairmanship. That, however, did not mean that it should have his whole-hearted approval. He himself declared at Haripura that he did not personally like the resolution which had come before the A.I.C.C. in Calcutta,—not that he objected to the condemnation of repression in Mysore,—indeed, he whole-heartedly endorsed it,—but that at a time when the country had to face all manner of big problems and a big crisis, it was better perhaps if 'we tone down our activity slightly, so far as the use of the Congress name is concerned and push forward and prepare good ground for action not only in British India but the States. Today a remarkable awakening is taking place all over India including the Indian States. We on our part must try to nurse it, cherish it and we must organise ourselves. The most controversial point in the Working Committee's draft at Haripura related to the clause which banned the organisation of the Congress Committees in the Indian States. It was naturally felt from the recent instance of Mysore and the civil disobedience campaign going on there, that the Congress which for the moment was following a different policy outside Mysore could not get embroiled with civil disobedience in the Mysore State in all its implications and repercussions on other parts of the country. It was also pointed out that when it was a question of civil disobedience, the Congress could not be there to help, while when it was a question of constructive programme there were the All India Organisations doubtless affiliated to but more or less working independently of the Congress to render all necessary aid.

"Therefore, the use of the Congress name by the State Committees was definitely a hindrance to them. Times would soon change undoubtedly but meanwhile it would be better for the States' people to depend upon themselves.

and any day the Congress would reconsider its decision. On behalf of the States' Peoples Conference, this was combated somewhat vehemently. Mysore had only asked for permission like any British Province to carry on a campaign, of civil disobedience. The recent policy of promoting mass contacts was well known and yet the Working Committee's draft took the public by surprise. It was not the committees in the States alone that were banned, there were committees and committees, some good, some bad, both in the States and in the provinces. The caravan of India must march as a whole. One section cannot leave another behind. Nor could we allow 562 States to remain as so many Ulsters right about us. The Working Committee's advice that separate organisations should be formed in the States was sure to be counterbalanced and even nullified by the manoeuvres of the interested parties and ere long, they would find the States riddled with a number of communal and sectional organisations. The only salvation for India was the Indian National Congress. It was the one National Body from which all powers spring, the generating spot of all national forces. Unless the virus and the germ of the Congress was introduced into the Indian States we would only be perpetuating communalism in them. In the end, a compromise was reached which did not taboo the formation of Congress Committees in the States but substituted the following for the last sentence of para 5 of the draft resolution:

'The Congress therefore directs that for the present Congress Committees in the States shall function under the direction and control of the Working Committee and shall not engage in any parliamentary activity or direct action in the name of or under the auspices of the Congress. The internal struggle of the States must not be undertaken in the name of the Congress. Subject to this, the organisation must be started and continued where the Congress Committees already exist.'

"The matter did not end there. In the open session, there was an attempt to go back upon the compromise on the initiative of some members unconnected with the States' Peoples Organisation. But this attempt was firmly put down by the spokesmen of States' People Conference and the compromise was put through honourably and successfully.

From this day onward it must be owned that there was a greater harmony and a more or less a complete identity of view-points between the States' Peoples workers as such and the Congress as a whole. An intimate connection was established between the two. Indeed the two trains running on different lines (Railway) met and formed a combined train under the common drive given by Gandhi. He was the one consultant on all States' matters. Was it the Eastern Agency States with their unprecedented repression and abhorrent reactionary methods attended by protests and mass violence ending in the murder of Mr. Bazleghatt, Assistant Agent to the States and the policy of frightfulness following it, resulting in the exodus of 20,000 people into adjoining British Indian area? Or was it the tragedy of Vidura Aswaddha in that highly advanced State of Mysore with its black record of ten men shot dead and twice as many wounded, and the equally severe tragedies of shooting which were not even smoothened by conventional enquiries into their causation and nature? Was it the battle royal at Rajkot into which armies of Satyagrahis marched in serried ranks to offer battle to the Prince and his Durbar over promises broken and pledges unfulfilled? Or was it the Rajputana and Central Indian States where, as in Jaipur, the very formation of a Praja Mandal and the magnificent social work in famine relief was seriously objected to? Or was it the Northern Indian States of the Punjab and Kashmir, where Satyagrahis were locked up in prison in hundreds and thousands? It was

to Gandhi that all eyes turned. In addition the acceptance of presidentship of Jawaharlal of the All India States' Peoples Conference at Ludhiana in February 1939 (to anticipate events) established greater intimacy between the politics of States and the provinces and gave the quietus once for all (it was hoped) to internal dissatisfaction and dissension".⁷

Dr. Pattabhi's analysis is remarkable for its cogency and throws a flood of light on the success story of the epic struggle of the States peoples. He himself being the key figure, it should be understood that wherever references were made to the States' Peoples' Conference in the aforesaid narration, it was indeed to him that the reference really applied.

The real fight in the matter of reforms in the States was not between the people and the State administration alone but between the paramount power and the people of the States in which the former was ready to resist any pressure brought to bear on them from the leadership in the provinces.

And it was left to Gandhiji to correctly diagnose that it was only the conversion of the rulers, through peaceful means, which could bring about reforms. The paramount power had to be removed and the master-stroke in policy which Gandhiji imparted to his handling *vis-a-vis* the States did push the British administrators to a corner in their sinister attempt to use the Princes as a counterpoise to popular forces in the federal legislature.

It was Dr. Pattabhi that assiduously strove to make the AISPC the authentic voice of the States' people and he soon discovered that Nehru as its president would achieve the desired end because of his rapport with Gandhiji and his national stature. Nehru accordingly presided over the Ludhiana Session in 1939.

In his presidential address Nehru praised the role of the AISPC—which in effect was a tribute to Dr. Pattabhi—and saw

7. Sitaramayya B, Pattabhi, *op. cit.*, *The History of the Indian National Congress* Vol. II, pp. 78-81

in the freedom struggle of the people of the States an element of wisdom, courage and struggle in the general context of the larger national movement in the country. The AISPC got further strengthened when Sheikh Abdullah of Jammu and Kashmir was drawn into it. On one occasion, Dr. Pattabhi made it clear that "the struggle in the States was not so much against the Princes as against the political department of the Government of India and against British imperialism". He said that the relational aspect of the struggle for freedom between the Congress and the States' people was inseparable and one could not be conducted smoothly without the aid of the other. "The State subjects formed the second wheel of the chariot of India's freedom and unless they were strengthened, the chariot would not be strengthened."

Dr. Pattabhi continued to strive for greater coordination between the Congress and the AISPC and as a member of the standing committee of the AISPC he represented the case of the States before the Congress Working Committee. From here, the next step was logical. The Tripuri session of the Congress adopted Dr. Rajendra Prasad's resolution that in view of the awakening that had been taking place the restraints which the Congress had placed on itself in relation to the States peoples movement should be removed. This resolution bridged the gulf between the AISPC and the Congress. Dr. Pattabhi called on the people of the States to fight with determined effort to achieve independence.

Dr. Pattabhi continued as vice-president of the AISPC and steered the organisation during the fateful days of the visit of the Cripps Mission to India in 1942.

On December 21, 1946 the Constituent Assembly adopted a resolution moved by K. M. Munshi setting up a committee of the Chamber of Princes and with other representatives of the Indian States for determining the distribution of seats in the Assembly not exceeding 93 and for deciding the method by which such representatives should be returned to the Assembly.

Dr. Pattabhi was included in the committee, the other members being Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Shankar Rao Deo, and N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar. The committee submitted its report to the President of the Constituent Assembly on April 28, 1947 "after it had succeeded in securing agreement on the method of distribution of the 93 seats".⁸ A press communique issued said that the States Negotiating Committee of the Chamber of Princes and the States Committee of the Constituent Assembly generally accepted the recommendations of their two secretariats as regards the allocation of seats among the different States and authorised the making of such minor alterations as are considered necessary by the parties concerned. They also agreed that not less than 50 per cent of the total representatives of States shall be elected by the elected members of legislatures where such legislatures do not exist, of other electoral colleges. The States would endeavour to increase the quota of elected representatives to as much above 50 per cent of the total number as possible. However, on a suggestion made by Nehru, the two committees appointed a joint committee consisting of Dr. Pattabhi, N. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar, Sultan Ahmad and V. T. Krishnamachari to consider the modifications in the allocation of seats and other matters of detail that might arise from time to time. Following the subcommittee's deliberations an agreement was reached. Nehru reported to the Constituent Assembly on April 28, 1947 that "after a great deal of discussion it was decided that not less than 50 per cent of the representatives should be elected by the elected members of the assemblies where they exist or by some other method of election which may be devised. We came to a compromise on this proportion though we would have liked the proportion to be higher. I submit that this compromise that we came to was an honourable compromise for all parties concerned and I think it will lead to satisfactory result".⁹ Dr. Pattabhi declared, "We have

8. Shiva Rao, B., *The Framing of India's Constitution : A Study*, p. 526

9. Shiva Rao, B., *The Framing of India's Constitution : Select Documents*, Vol. I, p. 713

inaugurated a new era of friendliness and friendship and we shall go on cementing this in order to make an India which will weld the provinces and the States into one solid whole to comprise an independent Indian Republic".¹⁰

The question of privy purses to the princes had also to be determined following the integration of the Indian States with the rest of the country. Here again, Dr. Pattabhi played an important part being on a sub-committee of the Congress on the subject along with Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Sankar Rao Deo.

It was a matter of great satisfaction for Dr. Pattabhi that what he worked for as president of the AISPC was finally achieved when the princes, as Sardar Patel said, made an honourable exit.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 720

States on a Linguistic Basis

DR. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA was one of the earliest Andhra leaders who demanded a separate province for the Telugu speaking people of the province of Madras. He secured a place in history as a protagonist of linguistic states.

The demand for the division of provinces on linguistic lines gained momentum in the early years of the twentieth century. The formation of provinces originally was mainly governed by considerations of administrative convenience and economy and by reasons of military strategy and security. The necessity for re-distribution of provinces was recognized by Lord Curzon as early as in 1902. He said that he was considering the question of re-distribution of provinces though he did not use the words "on linguistic basis". He said it was necessary for administrative purposes that the provinces in India should be readjusted and rearranged and in this connection he observed, "The question of territorial and administrative re-distribution is, indeed, in our judgment one of the most urgent and vital of the many problems for which we at present are endeavouring to find a solution."¹

The linguistic principle figured, for the first time, in a letter from Sir Herbert Risley, Home Secretary, Government of India, to the Government of Bengal dated December 3, 1903 in which a proposal for the partition of Bengal was first mooted. Later, in the partition Resolution of 1905 and in the despatch of Lord Hardinge's Government to the Secretary of State dated August

1. Quoted in *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, 30 March 1938
Vol. VI, No. 15

25, 1911 proposing the annulment of partition, 'language' was again predominantly mentioned.

Expressing his views soon after Lord Hardinge's Despatch came into force, Dr. Pattabhi stated: "Times without number both in the press and from the platform, in private discourses and at conferences, has it been pointed out by a responsible and thoughtful public, that if India is destined to work her way to self-government, it must be by processes not mediaeval and antiquated but by those which are thoroughly consistent with modern life and modern conditions. What are these processes and those units whose integration will lead to the fulfilment of a rational destiny and the realization of the ideal of self-government based on the principle of local autonomy clearly set forth in the Lord Hardinge's Despatch ?

Answering these questions Dr. Pattabhi explained :

"That in the interests of national destiny, the country should be remapped out and demarcated into units whose integration will serve to facilitate and hasten its fulfilment is the idea underlying the scheme of an Andhra Province and stimulating the volume of public opinion that is working it out. Even in the interests of good administration—which is a small matter altogether compared to the larger idea already set forth—such a demarcation would become necessary, for administration too must have its ideals leading to uplift of humanity and not contending itself with making men mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. We have survived the mediaeval notions of government which obviously regarded the collection of taxes and the maintenance of law and order as its highest achievements. We know on the contrary that these former are but elementary factors in the modern conception of the State and have learned to regard government as a living, ever-changing instrument of human progress made by man for man's advancement and not for mere maintenance of any political creed, yet nonetheless cautious in experiment and change. We have ourselves

witnessed the stages and steps through which the country has passed.

"Codes of law, courts of justice, police and prisons, post and telegraph, roads and railway—all these had to be slowly established. Then the great rivers were taken in hand. But, says Sir Holderness, as an explorer may climb a hill only to find the prospect blocked by higher summits, so the Indian government as a result of its balance is faced by new demands and problems. Much water has flown under the bridge since the partition agitation was set on foot. That was an agitation rooted in sentiment offended by irritating measures; ours is one rooted likewise in sentiment but kindled into activity by a new vision and a new hope. That was a movement contending itself with good government, this is one that is struggling for self-government. That sought and found its culmination in Lord Hardinge's Despatch; this found its birth in it. The Andhra movement constitutes one of the several new problems and demands by which the political explorer of Sir T. Holderness finds the prospect blocked."²

Dr Pattabhi went on to explain these new problems and their importance. He was in favour of what Sir Bamfylde Fuller wrote, namely, "It would have been well for the country had its division into provinces for purposes of Government followed the lines marked by race and language so as to reinforce the sympathy which arises from similarity by feelings of pride in the local government. The existing administrative divisions are so heterogeneous as to have a directly contrary effect (to the growth of national sentiment)". Dr. Pattabhi also noted the fact that Sir John Stratchey had pointed out that the political limits of the provinces have little connection with any physical characteristics. Being a crusader in the cause of linguistic provinces he approvingly quoted the views of Sir Bamfylde Fuller in an article he wrote as early as in 1913 that "the nearest approach to national

2. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *Indian Nationalism*, p. 45

sentiment in India is that which springs from language.”³

This is the very note of the whole movement. Cultivate the culture it embodies; cultivate the sentiment it generates; cultivate the self-consciousness that it justifies. Then, Dr. Patabhi comments, “You are true to your history, and to your traditions, then you love your country, then you know your needs and realise your aspirations.” He argued that the organism must be such as, while able to nourish itself, is also capable of furnishing a stimulus to the growth of the national life that it represents and helping it to keep pace with the progress of life and character elsewhere. Such a possibility, Dr. Patabhi was convinced, as early as in 1913, was attained only through “a province delimited by language and to ask for it is true patriotism, while to get it, marks the first step in the up-building of the national edifice”.⁴

Lord Hardinge in his despatch proposing an annulment of partition of Bengal would lay down as necessary for a settlement of the boundaries to be satisfactory and conclusive a few essential conditions such as—it must provide convenient administrative units, satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the people and be clearly based upon broad grounds of political and administrative expediency. These Lord Hardinge carried into effect by stating the claim for reuniting “the five Bengali-speaking divisions and forming them into a presidency to be administered by a Governor-in-Council”.⁵

Of the Biharis, Lord Hardinge said, “we are satisfied that it is in the highest degree desirable to give the Hindi-speaking people now included within the province of Bengal a separate administration. These people have hitherto been unequally yoked with the Bengalis and have never had a fair opportunity for development. There has, moreover, been a very marked awakening

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. Government of India Despatch dated 23 August, 1911, addressed to the Secretary of State for India by the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge

in Bihar in recent years and a strong belief has grown up among the Biharis that Bihar will never develop until it is dissociated from Bengal. That belief will, unless a remedy is found, give rise to agitation in the near future and the present is an admirable opportunity to carry out on our own initiative a thoroughly sound and much deserved change.”⁶

Dr. Pattabhi made use of Lord Hardinge’s arguments to press for the creation of an Andhra Province in 1912 itself. He started a vigorous propaganda drive in this regard and wrote to say that if the needs of the government should ever decide upon a division of the Madras Presidency, “There would be nothing unseemly in the Andhras desiring a separate Andhra Province.”

Dr. Pattabhi referred, in this context, to a criticism that if the Andhras speaking Telugu were granted a province, it was feared the Malayalees would put forward their claims for separate recognition. “We welcome such a demand and I for one would give priority to their claims. The future map of India will have to be recast in a measure which may very soon confound us and the geography we have learnt”.

Prophetic as these words were, he said, “the Malayalees, might have to stand apart, portions of the Madras Presidency may have to be given to Bombay, the Central Provinces may have to be considerably dwarfed, portions being given over to Bombay and to Madras. Gujarat and the Gujaratis may claim separate entity. Bihar already stands apart and the Oriyas may one day have their own integrity recognized. It was by the operation of no natural laws that the present provinces came into existence.”⁷

Dr. Pattabhi was not the person who would feel satisfied merely with the service rendered to the objectives of the present hour. He was highly critical of those who saw nothing objectionable in the then existing arrangement for administration for in

6. *Ibid.*

7. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *op. cit.* *For and Against Andhra Province* p. 51

his view, what was important was "to make one's contribution to growth, progress and the future". It was in this light that one would have to see the whole concept of a realignment of boundaries and of a separate linguistic province for the Andhras.

It was the Andhra Conference which held its first meeting in Bapatla in 1913 which gave expression in concrete terms to the need for achieving a separate Telugu province, though an earlier conference in Machilipatnam in 1908 organised by Dr. Pattabhi had given expression to the new movement for a Telugu state. The resolution proposed at the Bapatla conference on May 26 and 27, 1913 was as follows :

"This conference (1) records its opinion:— (a) That to ensure an efficient administration and the promotion of the best interests of the people of India the government will have to make sooner or later language areas the territorial bases for provincial administration.

(b) That provincial administration on such a basis is necessary in order that self-government on colonial lines pleaded for by the Indian National Congress and provincial autonomy approved by the Government of India may develop on national and healthy lines. (2) And urges upon the Andhra public the desirability of focussing public opinion on the question of whether the government should be asked to constitute the Telugu districts as a separate province."⁸

There were some voices of dissent. The resolution was opposed on the technical ground that it was not freely circulated among the leaders of the Telugu-speaking areas thus preventing them from going deeper into the matter. In view of this, Konda Venkatappayya, another leading Andhra stalwart from Guntur, proposed an amendment to the resolution. He said that in view of the differences of opinion among the representatives of the Telugu districts and the opposition of a small but appreciable minority, it would be well in the interest of the conference to

8. *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol VI, No. 15 quoted in the Resolution of Konda Vankatappayya passed on 30 March, 1983

refer the matter to the standing committee of the conference and wait for one more year. He said he was one with those who thought that a separate province would accelerate the progress of the Andhra people, but as it was the stern duty of all to see no schisms among them and to form always a united front, he would advise under the circumstances to respect the feelings of the minority and postpone the question for the next year. Meanwhile, he hoped that there would be a great opportunity to educate the Telugu country upon the question and convert the opponents to their view.

The Bapatla conference laid the true foundations for an Andhra province and it was Dr. Pattabhi who, as N. Subba Rau observed, paved the way for the crystallisation of the Andhra movement. Dr. Pattabhi declared that "the day is not far of when Indians themselves will responsibly be associated with the work of the administration."

In 1915, Dr. Pattabhi, with the help of another Andhra leader, Mocherla Ramachandra Rao, drafted a resolution to be moved at the subjects committee meeting of the Bombay Congress Session. According to Dr. Pattabhi, "Wide and strong was the belief that for Provincial Autonomy to be successful, the medium of instruction as well as administration must be the provincial languages and that the failure of the British administration, notably in the domain of Local Self-government, is undoubtedly due to the pell-mell admixture of populations in British Provinces which are carved out on no logical or ethnological, but on a chronological basis."⁹ In 1915, the Congress was not really prepared to deal with the question though it had to be conceded not very much later.

However, at the session, Dr. Pattabhi brought to focus the extremely anomalous situation in which the people speaking one language were distributed among several provinces, while the people speaking different languages were made to live in one

9. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *The History of the Indian National Congress* Vol. I, p. 147

province. There was a heated discussion on the issue and Dr. Pattabhi had to give up for the time being. The next opportunity came to him at the Subjects Committee of the Calcutta Congress in 1917. The pace for it, however, was set at the Lucknow Congress of 1916 which accepted the principle after duly consulting the provincial Congress committees of Madras and Bombay that the Telugu-speaking districts of the Madras Presidency be constituted into a separate Congress province. Sind followed suit and Karnataka came later.

At the Calcutta session, however, it was not all smooth sailing. For one thing, Mrs. Annie Besant who presided over the session was opposed to the very concept of dividing the country on a linguistic basis, and for another, the Tamil contingent was also not in favour of a separate provincial Congress committee for Andhra.

Dr. Pattabhi who gave notice of a resolution for the session said that to realise the ideal of a federated Indian nationality, a linguistic reorganisation of States was an essential pre-condition. The issue was keenly debated at the subjects committee. Even Gandhiji thought that the question might await the implementing of the proposed constitutional reforms. But Dr. Pattabhi was not prepared to get the subject postponed. He was, for certain, in an unenviable position inasmuch as he had to contend with Mrs. Annie Besant for whom he had the highest regard, having been her ardent admirer. Such was his total admiration for her that he took the initiative even in sending up a resolution stating that unless Mrs. Besant and her colleagues who were then in jail were forthwith released, the Congress should not have anything to do with Montagu during his visit to the country.

A factor which largely helped Dr. Pattabhi in his endeavour was the big support that Bal Gangadhar Tilak gave him for his plea at the AICC meeting. Tilak saw the point, namely, that linguistic provinces were an essential condition, a pre-requisite to real provincial autonomy. The matter was discussed in all its aspects at the meeting for over two hours and was ultimately

accepted late in the night. Says Dr. Pattabhi, "The principle which was then accepted became the guiding principle for a redistribution immediately after the Nagpur Congress, and we have now twenty-one Congress circles as against the nine British provinces."¹⁰

What happened in Calcutta was a personal victory for Dr. Pattabhi and, soon after, the Telugu-speaking districts of Madras Presidency were constituted into a separate Congress province—a precursor of a separate province for the Andhras. Dr Pattabhi demonstrated that linguism was not a concession to tribal instinct but a manifestation of sub-nationalism.

The next important step in the evolution of linguistic States was taken when a deputation of sixteen leading Andhras, including Dr. Pattabhi, waited on Montagu and Lord Chelmsford to plead for a separate Andhra Province. Konda Venkatappayya described the meeting as favourable and said, "the result was that our main principle that the provinces of India should be redistributed according to the language basis was recognized."

In the Government of India Act of 1919, a provision was accordingly introduced whereby the provincial legislature of the concerned province could pass a resolution to constitute a new province and that resolution, subject to certain conditions, be acted upon. The State Reorganisation Commission of 1955 made a reference to the Montagu-Chelmsford Report that preceded the 1919 Act. Although in the report they rejected a suggestion for the formation, within the existing provinces, of sub-provinces on a linguistic basis, they commended the objective of smaller and more homogeneous provinces.

The authors of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report had observed :

"We cannot doubt that the business of Government would be simplified if administrative units were both smaller and more homogeneous, and when we bear in mind the prospect

10. *Ibid*, p. 148

of the immense burdens of Government in India being transferred to comparatively inexperienced hands, such considerations acquire additional weight. It is also a strong argument in favour of linguistic and radical units of Government that by making it possible to conduct the business of legislation in the vernacular, they would contribute to draw into the arena of public affairs, men who were not acquainted with English. We believe emphatically that re-distribution of provincial areas cannot be imposed upon the people by official action, and that such a process ought in any case to follow and neither precede nor accompany, constitutional reform. But we are bound to indicate our own clear opinion that whenever such re-distribution is necessary and can be effected by a process of consent, the attempt to do so should be made; and, therefore, we desire that it should be recognized as one of the earliest duties incumbent upon all the reformed provincial Governments to test provincial opinion schemes directed to this end. In Orissa and Berar at all events, it seems to us that the possibility of instituting sub-provinces need not be excluded from consideration at a very early date.¹¹

It was in 1920 at the Nagpur session of the Congress that the principle of linguistic re-distribution of provinces was finally accepted as a political objective. Seven years later, following the appointment of the Indian Statutory Commission, the Congress adopted a resolution expressing the opinion that "the time has come for the redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis" and that a beginning could be made by constituting Andhra, Utkal, Sindh and Karnataka into separate provinces.

Those supporting the resolution spoke of the right of self-determination of the people speaking the same language and following the same tradition and culture. The question of re-distribution of provinces was also a matter of consideration in detail by the Nehru Committee of the All Parties Conference in 1928.

11. *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms*, 1918, p. 246

The Committee gave its powerful support to the linguistic principle in the following terms : "If a province has to educate itself and do its daily work through the medium of its own language, it must necessarily be a linguistic area. If it happens to be a polyglot area, difficulties will continually arise and the media of instruction and work will be two or even more languages. Hence it becomes most desirable for provinces to be regrouped on a linguistic basis. Language, as a rule, corresponds with a special variety of culture, of traditions, and literature. In a linguistic area, all these factors will help in the general progress of the province."¹² The Nehru Committee recommended that re-distribution of provinces should take place on the basis of the wishes of the population, language and geographical, economic and financial principles. Of all these factors, however, in the opinion of the Committee, "the main consideration must necessarily be the wishes of the people and the linguistic unity of the area concerned".

An All Parties' Convention which was held in Calcutta in December 1928 of delegates interested in promoting the cause of linguistic provinces formed what was called the Linguistic Provinces League. Dr. Pattabhi was made its chairman, while Biswanath Das, who was to become the first Chief Minister of Orissa under the 1935 Act when the Congress party accepted office, was elected its Secretary.

The demand for a linguistic re-distribution of provinces was raised at the Round Table Conference but was not pursued with the persistence which characterised the communal pressures. It was left to the Raja of Parlakimedi to ask for a separate Oriya Province at the First Round Table Conference. His main argument was that since Orissa was an area with a single language and definite historical and cultural associations, it should be under one administration instead of being parcelled out among four different provinces—Bihar, Bengal, the Central Provinces and Madras.

12. Report of the Nehru Committee, All Parties Conference, 1928, P.

At the Second Round Table Conference M. Ramachandra Rao echoed the views of Dr. Pattabhi in his memorandum for a territorial re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis. V.V. Giri and the Raja of Bobbili in separate memoranda presented a powerful case for the constitution of a separate province for the Andhras. However, one important reason why these advocates of linguistic provinces did not press the matter to an issue in spite of the soundness of their case was that they did not wish to impede the framing of the new Constitution or sidetrack the conference from main issue.

Thus Ramachandra Rao pleaded for the provision of a flexible method in this regard and said that territorial re-distribution of British Indian provinces should not be made dependent upon an amendment of the constitution as such a procedure would inevitably cause inordinate delay. He suggested that the Government of India might be empowered to carry out the re-distribution after assessing the views of the legislatures of the provinces affected, as well as of the federal legislature.

The Simon Commission also dealt elaborately with the issue and observed :

“Madras may be divided into several areas according to the predominance of particular languages. The principal languages are Tamil and Telugu which are spoken by 18 million and 16 million respectively. Malayalam is the language of over three millions in the Indian States of Travancore and Cochin and the adjoining British district of Malabar; and Kanarese is spoken in the districts bordering on Mysore and the Bombay presidency, while in the extreme north east of the province, there are several Oriya-speaking areas.

“These linguistic differences have during recent years assumed considerable political importance owing to the separatist tendencies which they have fostered with the movement for linguistic amalgamation we shall have occasion to deal elsewhere. The demand for the formation of an Andhra or Telugu province which was put forward 17

years ago at a conference of Telugu-speaking districts has been persistent for many years and has now become an important political issue.

“It has on two occasions in recent years been the subject of formal debate in the Madras legislature, which has, by fairly large majorities, endorsed the proposal for the constitution of a separate Andhra province . . . The social changes in this province are of no less importance than the linguistic and they have already exercised profound influence on the political situation and on the grouping of the parties.”¹³

This observation is a clear indication of the earnestness with which the demand for an Andhra Province was presented by Dr. Pattabhi and others.

In 1936, the Orissa Province was created in recognition of the linguistic principle. Though the Andhra demand was indeed the first in a sequence of events, it was not conceded because of certain complications besetting the matter. The future of Madras City was a controversial issue. There were some among the Andhras like Dr. Pattabhi who did not want a linguistic province to be delayed until the future of Madras City was decided. But leaders like Prakasam would have nothing less than an Andhra Province with Madras City as an integral part. The Tamillians were, of course, stoutly opposed to parting with Madras City under any circumstances. C. Rajagopalachari who was influential in Congress politics was not for making any concession in regard to Madras City.

Linguism thus took on the character of an anti-Tamil movement. Prakasam as president of the APCC moved the committee's headquarters from Vijayawada to Madras. A suggestion was at that time mooted that Madras City could have a separate provincial congress committee on the model of Delhi. Rajagopalachari opposed any such idea and was keen that a Tamil Nadu future for Madras must be fully assured.

13. Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. I, para 74

The appointment of Dr. Pattabhi as APCC president, following Prakasam's induction into the Madras Cabinet as Minister for Revenue, brought about a new situation. He first shifted the PCC office to Machilipatnam. The internal differences among Andhra leaders came to the surface and this certainly weakened the Andhra movement. Dr. Pattabhi, however, had a resolution passed by the provincial Congress during his tenure as president from 1937 to 1939 demanding the formation of an Andhra province.

The Madras Assembly also passed a resolution urging the creation of an Andhra Province—thanks to the influence Dr. Pattabhi exerted over the elder statesman, Konda Venkatappayya who moved the resolution on March 30, 1938. The resolution said : "This Assembly recommends to the Government that the view of this chamber be communicated under section 290 of the Government of India Act of 1935 to His majesty in Council that steps may be taken as early as possible for the constitution of separate provinces so as to place under separate autonomous provincial administrations the areas wherein the language predominantly spoken is respectively Tamil, Telugu, Kanada and Malayalam."

C. Rajagopalachari, Prime Minister of Madras, fully endorsed the plea. He said that judging the question on every one of the ideals, the claim of the Andhras stood very good. There the use of a common speech is a strong and natural basis. As regards the other tests, namely, race, religion, economic interests, geographical contiguity, and due balance between country and town,—on all these points there is no cause for opposing the claim for a separate Andhra Province. It is but right to pass such a resolution. Therefore, I support the proposition and hope the House will accept it". Thereupon K. Venkatappayya's plea that this Government will recommend to the Government of India and to the Secretary of State for India to take the necessary steps thereon was carried by the House.

Meanwhile Dr. Pattabhi took upon himself the task of appeas-

ing the leaders of the Andhra districts constituting what was known as Rayalaseema since they had doubts that in an Andhra Province when created they would be swamped by the coastal districts. Dr. Pattabhi was instrumental in what has come to be called the Sri Bagh Pact under which it was agreed that two university centres would be developed—one in Anantapur and the other in Waltair. It was also agreed that in the legislature, there would be an equal distribution of seats, and that the provincial headquarters and the High Court might be advantageously situated in different places so as to give importance to both the areas.

Venkatappayya told the Madras Assembly that following the Sri Bagh Pact, the one objection that was raised that there was no consensus of opinion on the question of Andhra Province was resolved. He said, "the Sri Bagh Pact was formulated, signed, sealed and delivered and, therefore, we of the coastal districts solemnly affirm it and promise to stand by it to the last."¹⁴

How far Lord Erskine, then Governor of Madras, observed propriety in writing to the Secretary of State in the following words and whether what he said truly represented the mind of C. Rajagopalachari is still a matter of doubt : "I may say that C. R. is himself far from being in favour of breaking up the Madras Presidency into a collection of probably bankrupt and certainly inefficient small entities; but for political reasons he has to acquiesce in a motion that is brought forward in about a week's time in the Madras Assembly in favour of the formation of two new provinces of Andhra and Karnataka."¹⁵ Of significance in this context is the statement made by S. Gopal in his book on Jawaharlal Nehru : "He (C.R.) intrigued with the Governor against his own party to prevent the formation of an Andhra Province."¹⁶

14. *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, March 1938, Vol. VI, No. 15

15. *Erskine Papers*, Vol. 13, 4 April 1938

16. Gopal, S., *Jawaharlal Nehru : A Biography*, Vol. I, p. 230.

Dr. Pattabhi reacted sharply to certain statements made by the Tamil leaders that the creation of an Andhra Province would involve additional expenditure and said, "It looks as though the British will grant Swaraj sooner to India than our Tamil ministers would a province for the Andhras."

It would thus be clear that Dr. Pattabhi kept on the tempo of the demand for a separate province undaunted by hurdles and setbacks that came on the way. As the States Reorganization Commission pointed out, "Between the years 1928 and 1947 the Congress reaffirmed its adherence to the linguistic principle on three occasions : (1) at the Calcutta session held in October 1937 when it reiterated its policy regarding linguistic provinces and recommended the formation of the Andhra and Karnataka provinces; (2) by a resolution passed at Wardha in 1938, the Working Committee gave an assurance to deputations from Andhra, Karnataka and Kerala that linguistic re-distribution of the provinces would be undertaken to do so; and (3) in the election manifesto of 1945-46 in which it repeated the view that administrative units should be constituted as far as possible on a linguistic and cultural basis."¹⁷

There is also no denying that Dr. Pattabhi was largely instrumental in getting a resolution passed by the AICC in Calcutta in 1937 "reaffirming the Congress policy regarding the re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis and recommending to the Madras and Bombay governments to consider the formation of separate Andhra and Karnataka provinces respectively". All this apart, Dr. Pattabhi was also in favour of a Vishal Andhra comprising the Telugu-speaking people of the Andhra area as well as the Andhra portion of Hyderabad State. The SRC examined the question and said that Andhra and Telangana have common interests and "we hope these interests will tend to bring the people closer to each other".

When the Constituent Assembly was set up to frame a new

17. Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission, 1956, para 56.

Constitution for India, it was Dr. Pattabhi's ambition that the issue relating to the creation of a separate province for the Andhra should be settled.

In fact, the Government of India even made a statement that Andhra could be mentioned as a separate unit in the new Constitution, as was done in the case of Sindh and Orissa by the Government of India Act of 1935. The Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly which went into this matter felt, however, that a bare mention of Andhra as a separate State in the schedule to the Constitution would not suffice to bring it into being from the commencement of the new Constitution.

Preparatory steps, therefore, were found to be necessary under the Government of India Act of 1935, as in force in the Dominion of India in order that a new Andhra State with all the machinery of Government might be in existence at the commencement of the new Constitution. The Drafting Committee recommended that a commission should be appointed to inquire into and work out all relevant matters not only as regards Andhra but also as regards other linguistic regions.

That indeed was the genesis of the first ever Linguistic Provinces Commission which was appointed by the President of the Constituent Assembly under the Chairmanship of S. K. Dar, a retired judge of the Allahabad High Court. Six months later, in December 1948, the Commission submitted its report.

The Commission observed that in any rational and scientific planning that might take place in regard to the provinces of India in future, homogeneity of language alone cannot be decisive or even an important factor. Administrative convenience, history, geography, economy, culture, and many other matters would also have to be given due weight. It might be, the Commission said, that the provinces thus formed would also show homogeneity of language and, in a way, might resemble linguistic provinces. But in forming the provinces, the emphasis should primarily be on administrative convenience, and homogeneity of

language would enter into consideration only as a matter of administrative convenience and not by its own independent force.

The Commission was emphatic that this was not "the time for embarking upon the enterprise of redrawing the map of the whole of southern India, including the Deccan, Bombay and the Central Provinces. India is yet to become a nation and Indian States are yet to be integrated... It cannot afford to add to its anxieties the heat, controversy and bitterness, which the demarcation of boundaries and allotment of the capital cities of Bombay and Madras will involve... However urgent the problem of redistribution of provinces may be, it is not more urgent than the defence problem, the inflation problem, the refugee problem, the food problem, the production problem, and many other problems with which India is burdened today."¹⁸

The Commission while urging that India should have a strong Centre and a national language to secure stability and integration pointed out, "An immediate solution has, however, to be found for the desire for separation which exists among the Telugus, Malayaloes, Kannadigas and Maharashtrians. These linguistic groups are entitled to their legitimate share in the administration, government and development of their provinces."¹⁹

And yet the Commission said "the only good that we can see in a linguistic province is the possible advantage it has in working the Legislature in the regional language. But this is more than counter-balanced by the obstruction the linguistic provinces will inevitably cause to the spread of national language or national feeling in the country." While admitting that in some of the existing provinces linguistic homogeneity exists, and this is a source of constant irritation to the other linguistic groups who

18. Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission, 1948. Quoted in *The Framing of India's Constitution : Select Documents* Ed. by B. Shiva Rao, Vol. IV, p. 475.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 476

are living in the heterogenous provinces, the Commission emphasised that till India was emotionally and physically integrated, "all sub-national tendencies in the existing linguistic provinces should be suppressed."²⁰

Anticipating the criticism that the Congress had already formed its units on a linguistic basis, and that the political leadership was committed to it, the Commission said, "We trust the political leadership will rise to the occasion" and "it is the duty of the Congress to come to a fresh decision on the subject in the light of the present circumstances."²¹

The Commission concluded "The formation of provinces on exclusively or even mainly linguistic considerations is not in the larger interests of the Indian nation and should not be taken in hand". At the same time it said, "The existing Provinces of Madras, Bombay, C. P. and Berar present serious administrative problems for which an administrative solution is urgently necessary and it is for the Centre to find a satisfactory solution to all these problems."²²

The Dar Commission was thus not very helpful to those who were agitating for linguistic provinces. The Congress election manifesto of 1945-46 which assured the people that the provinces would be reconstituted on linguistic lines, "not in every case but as far as possible", was doubtless the first attempt as was observed by the States Reorganisation Commission of 1955 to "qualify" the linguistic principle. There was indeed a perceptible change, however, in the outlook of the Congress leaders on the subject with the Partition and the achievement of independence.

The SRC observed in this context that these brought in the wake unthought of problems, giving rise to serious doubts as to whether the old pledges could be redeemed in the new conditions. And speaking before the Constituent Assembly, Prime

20 *Ibid*, p. 478.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 482

22. *Ibid.*

Minister Nehru said on November 27, 1947 that "first things must come first and the first thing is the security and stability of India".

The Dar Commissions findings raised an indignant protest from leading Andhras. N. G. Ranga, member of the Constituent Assembly, who was a strong protagonist of linguistic States said that he was very much afraid of the immediate consequences of the unhappy recommendations of the Commission. The people of Andhra and Karnataka had been clamouring for separate provinces since 1911 and, therefore, it was too much to ask them to give up the demand. It would be undemocratic to ask them to be content with the multi-lingual administration of Ministers and, "I trust our national leadership will refuse to be influenced by the reactionary report of the Dar Commission and would proceed to re-form all our provinces to make it easy for our nascent democracy to function in a progressive manner".

Dr. Pattabhi though disappointed at the new trend did not give up his crusade for linguistic provinces. And an opportunity came to him very soon after the Dar Commission submitted its report to the Constituent Assembly when he became President of the Jaipur session of the Congress. Largely under his influence the Congress agreed to take another look into the problem of linguistic reorganisation of States and appointed a committee comprising himself, Nehru and Patel popularly known as the JVP Committee, to consider the issue in the light of the report of the Dar Commission and the new problems that had arisen since independence. The Committee stated that : (a) When the Congress had given the seal of approval to the general principle of linguistic provinces it was not faced with the practical application of the principle and hence it had not considered the implications and consequences that arise from this practical application. (b) The primary consideration must be the security, unity and economic prosperity of India and every separatist and disruptive tendency should be rigorously discouraged ; (c) Language was not only a binding force but also a separatist

one ; and (d) the old Congress policy of having linguistic provinces could only be applied after careful thought had been given to each separate case and without creating serious administrative dislocation or mutual conflicts which would jeopardise the political and economic stability of the country.

Perhaps due to the insistence of Dr. Pattabhi, the Committee admitted, that if public sentiment was insistent and overwhelming, the practicability of satisfying the demand with its implications and consequences must be examined. However, it imposed two limitations on the possible satisfaction of such a demand : (i) that, at least in the beginning, the principle might be applied only to well defined areas about which there was mutual agreement; and (ii) that all the proposals which had merit behind them could not be implemented simultaneously.

The report did state that a beginning could be made with the creation of Andhra. The Committee, however, asserted, "Taking a broad practical view, the present is not an opportune time for the formation of new provinces. It would unmistakably retard the process of consolidation of our gains, our administrative, economic and financial structure which are still in a formative state, let loose, forces of disruption and disintegration and seriously interfere with the progressive solution of our economic and political difficulties."²³

The JVP report also said the protagonists of Andhra Province should abandon their claims to the city of Madras. Dr. Pattabhi was subjected to a great deal of criticism on this count by some of his Andhra colleagues like T. Prakasam and S. V. Rama Murthy. Dr. Pattabhi held the view, as has been already noted, that no second largest community can get the city for itself in preference to the first largest community. In this context, the significance of the recommendation of the States Reorganisation Commission upholding a similar view cannot be lost sight of. Dr. Pattabhi had no doubt in his mind that an

23. Report of the Linguistic Provinces Committee (JVP Report), 1949, p. 14.

Andhra Province would have materialised much earlier than it did if the claim to Madras City by the Andhras was not pressed.

The JVP report did raise doubts whether Dr. Pattabhi changed his mind in respect of linguistic provinces which he had been fighting for all along. The truth, however, seems to be that he preferred to wait a little longer and not force the pace in view of the strong opinions expressed against linguistic provinces by more than one committee and by more than one prominent national leader. It must be noted that it was on Dr. Pattabhi's insistence that the new Committee was appointed to go into the question within days of the submission of the report by the Dar Commission.

In his presidential address to the Congress session in Jaipur in December 1948, Dr. Pattabhi devoted a good part of it to espousing the cause of linguistic provinces. He said that the difficulties that confront the Constituent Assembly and the Government were varied but human intellect was given to solve problems and not shelve them and "we have no doubt that with understanding, sympathy and courage, with breadth of vision, a stern sense of the practical and due balancing of the immediate with the remote, we can readily find out solutions that will satisfy the legitimate demands of the advocates of the movement (linguistic)-which, by the way, is not a mushroom growth, but one 33 years old in the country, and is not a depressed classes mission, but is wholly national in outlook, constructive in character, and democratic in demands."²⁴

Dr. Pattabhi made a distinction between the demands of the Andhras and the Kannadigas for a separate province and the general redrawing of the Indian map on purely linguistic lines as when he said, "When the immediate issues affecting the South are settled, as they are bound to be, so as to include our new provinces in the schedule of the units of the new Constitution, the Government of the day will have to face the problem

24 *The Hindu*, 20 December, 1948.

of realigning the boundaries of *all* the provinces of India so as to minimise the difficulties of the bilingual areas and recognise the stern fact that such areas are the hyphens that unite, not the dashes that divide.”²⁵

Dr. Pattabhi thus answered the critics who proclaimed that linguistic realignment was neither urgent nor necessary and that such a step would weaken the national fabric. It was in a way an answer to the Dar Commission findings though the address itself must have been got ready before the report was presented to the President of the Constituent Assembly. Dr. Pattabhi, in fact, refuted the argument of those who said that the present was hardly the time for tackling so thorny a problem as that of the linguistic reorganisation of states by retorting, “A bad thing cannot be made good by mere waiting. A really good thing need not be put off for *any* reason whatsoever especially if it is fundamental.”²⁶

Therefore, it would not be very right to fault Dr. Pattabhi if the JVP Committee sought to postpone the tangled question for some time, while suggesting that a beginning could be made with the creation of an Andhra Province subject to certain conditions. In Dr. Pattabhi's opinion, a country was neither a geometrical entity in shape nor is a nation a geographical entity in composition. “It is a mixture of people whose development depends on historical traditions, physiographical environment, climatic conditions, and geo-political forces. Language is their binding factor. Unity is ~~not~~ uniformity but harmony in diversity.”²⁷

All this makes it clear that the principle of linguistic division, in his view, was no more an open question. Even Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant speaking on the resolution proposing the setting up of the JVP Committee told the Subjects Committee of the AICC that the Congress is aware of the strong desire for the

²⁵ Ibid. p. 10.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

formation of separate provinces on a linguistic basis and it has accepted the principle.²⁸

Naturally when the JVP Committee took a view that the question of rectification of the boundaries in the provinces should wait, it caused further dissatisfaction among those who were expecting that the way would be cleared for a wholesale re-organisation of States.

But Dr. Pattabhi's regret was that notwithstanding the fact that the JVP Committee indicated that efforts should be made to form a separate province for the Andhras, no positive step was taken in this direction.

Speaking in the Constituent Assembly in January 1949, he said it was his duty to express his views on linguistic provinces. He said, whenever a controversial issue arose "it is our habit of mind to say to the parties that are involved in it to come together, sit round a table and convince each other by easy arguments of love. This is a noble principle."²⁹ But he pointed out that the Andhras constituted the second largest community in India, next only to the Hindi-speaking people. Even leaving out the 85 lakhs of Andhras in the Nizam's territory "whom we do not want to absorb unless they want to come in, we who form three crores in all are about 18 millions in the Madras Presidency. The Madras Presidency has Madras as its capital, and there nearly half the population is Andhra. The people speak four different languages. In the legislature of Madras there is a babel of tongues. People do not understand one another." Dr. Pattabhi said more in anguish than in anger that, "we have been asking for a separate province for the last 35 years. We were asked to wait till a national Government came to power. Though that national Government has now come into existence it appears that the claim for the division of Andhras has receded much farther than ever before."³⁰

28. *Ibid.*, 19 December, 1948

29. *Constituent Assembly Debates*, Vol. 7 No. 35, p. 1345,

30. *Ibid.*

Since the JVP report was submitted the Congress again reiterated its view that an Andhra Province should be created though this was not concretised. The election manifesto issued by the Congress in 1951 proves the fact that the Congress has adhered to the views expressed by the JVP Report.

The manifesto declared that the decision about the reorganisation of States would ultimately depend on the wishes of the people concerned but expressed the opinion that while linguistic reasons were important, there were other factors also such as economic, administrative and financial considerations which had to be taken into account. As a practical example the Congress agreed to the formation of the Andhra State. And yet nothing was done to give effect to this intent expressed in the manifesto. Then came the fast by Potti Sriramulu in December 1952 who undertook this ordeal to press for the creation of an Andhra State with Madras City as an integral part of it. Unfortunately he died after 56 days of fasting on December 15, 1952. Violence broke out throughout Andhra. Prime Minister Nehru told Parliament that the Government could proceed with the formation of the Andhra State only according to the principles of the JVP Committee.

After the death of Sriramulu, the Government of India announced its decision to establish the State of Andhra "consisting of the Telugu-speaking areas of the present Madras State but not including the City of Madras."³¹ Mr. Justice Wanchoo was appointed to report on the financial and other implications of the decision.

Commenting on the fast by Sriramulu and his demand for Andhra State with Madras City as an integral part of it, *The Hindu* said : "As Mr. Nehru has justly said the terrible ordeal to which a good man has, in pursuance of his own convictions, submitted himself cannot but move everybody who has regard to human values. But by the same token it is unfair to others

31, Report of the States Reorganisation Commission, 1956, p. 18

who are as honestly attached to their own convictions to expect them to give up their position because something is being done which they can only regard as moral coercion. Fasts have no place in the politics of a free country; we can only hope that Mr. Sriramulu will be persuaded to give up his fast even at this perilously late hour since there is no desire on the part of anybody to withhold the Andhra State if the Andhras will take it."³²

Unfortunately, not a single Andhra leader of consequence did come out to persuade Sriramulu to end his ordeal. And as *The Hindu* pointed out, "those who were entitled to plead with him to desist were unable or unwilling to sway him from his tragic purpose."³³ Dr. Pattabhi commented that if the State were created in 1950 instead of 1953, Sriramulu could have been saved. Further, the belief that the Government had to take a decision in circumstances that might create the impression that it had truckled to the agitation would not have arisen if prompt action was taken by the powers-that-be. And for their part, the Andhras could well have heeded the view of Dr. Pattabhi on Madras City vis-a-vis Andhra province which if done might have helped to usher in the new State much earlier.

In fact, it was pointless to urge inclusion of Madras City in the Andhra Province when it was known for certain that the demographic character of the City was not such as to justify such a course of action, whatever be the historical factors governing the demand. Nor the Government of India would have found it feasible to take this step without inviting protests from the other linguistic groups in Madras City. On August 10, 1953 a Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha to provide for the formation of the Andhra State, excluding Madras City. The State came into being on October 1, 1953 with its capital at Kurnool.

This was the beginning of the linguistic re-organisation of States to consider which a States Reorganisation Commission was

32 Parthasarathy, R., *A Hundred Years of The Hindu*, p. 716

33. *Ibid.*

appointed following a statement by the Prime Minister within less than three months of the creation of the new State. The Commission which had as its chairman Mr. Fazl Ali, then Governor of Orissa, was charged with the task of investigating the condition of the linguistic problem, the historical background, the existing situation and the bearing of all important and relevant factors thereon. "They will be free to consider any proposal relating to such reorganisation. At the same time the Government made it clear that the whole question should be carefully examined, objectively and dispassionately, so that the welfare of the people of each constituent unit as well as of the nation as a whole was promoted."³⁴ The Commission submitted in 1955 an elaborate scheme for realignment of boundaries of the States on a linguistic basis. As far as Andhra was concerned, the Commission favoured its set up to continue and added that "there should be no change in the present position regarding Madras City and its future should be regarded as finally settled."³⁵

On November 1, 1956 another major development took place when the larger State of Andhra Pradesh—Vishal Andhra comprising eleven districts of Andhra and nine districts of the former Hyderabad State came into existence. Dr. Pattabhi's wishes were thus fulfilled and it was indeed an epic struggle that was carried on to secure a linguistic realignment of States.

34. Resolution of the Government of India dated 29 December 1953, setting up the States Reorganisation Commission, para 7.

35. Report of the States Reorganisation Commission, 1956, p. 257.

Conclusion

AFTER THIS BRIEF survey of the life and times of Dr. Pattabhi, the question arises as to what kind of a person he was. And almost the first thing that strikes one is that he was a versatile man whose knowledge was as extensive and varied as his experience. As early as in 1900, when he was twenty and had to decide whether he should become a doctor or take to the law as was being urged by his father-in-law, Ganjam Venkataratnam, who was himself a distinguished member of the legal profession, Dr. Pattabhi queried whether he could get on as a lawyer without speaking untruth. Venkataratnam, in the words of Dr. Pattabhi, was good enough to appreciate his difficulty and frank enough to admit that having been guilty of prevaricating in the profession, he would not add another untruth in answering a plain question from a simple-hearted young graduate.

Dr. Pattabhi was truly simple-hearted but at the same time stern and not afraid of calling a spade a spade. He relates an incident which brings out the true qualities in him in a telling manner. A certain rich zamindar established a girl's school in Dr. Pattabhi's town to commemorate the Coronation of George VI. The zamindar died in 1917 leaving a will drafted in that year—and in it a legacy of Rs. 30,000 for the school. The testator had no issue and the will was challenged. The reversionary rights were purchased by rival factions who were not interested in honouring the legacies. Dr. Pattabhi was then the

president of the school. It was contended that the school had not been running even before the death of the testator. Dr. Pattabhi was a principal witness and he was not aware why the lawyer would not examine him at home though Dr. Pattabhi offered to go to his house and pressed for examination before going to court. And in the court, says Dr. Pattabhi, the lawyer began at the wrong end "or at no end because he did not seem to have studied the case". Dr. Pattabhi at once addressed the court and explained the difficulty, but offered to give evidence in a narrative form. The judge agreed. "The judge, however, had been earlier negotiated with by the party opposite and he dismissed the school's claim."¹ But in the High Court he got a decree on the strength of his evidence. Dr. Pattabhi had a great opinion about the legal profession as such and, in one of his speeches, he said that amongst the learned professions of the world, it was one of the most important and possibly rightly so.

"I say 'possibly' because however learned it may be, I do not think that it fosters those qualities of truth and morality."² Dr. Pattabhi's view was that law can merely lay down the principles of justice but it cannot administer justice.

There have been many commissions of enquiry set up by the Government but Dr. Pattabhi says, "I have not heard of any commission appointed to enquire into the administration of justice. It is because the administration of justice is considered so perfect that no change is necessary or is it that we dare not change the system of English administration of justice in the prevailing order of things?"³ Dr. Pattabhi was strongly of the view that a commission should be set up for this purpose for "the whole system of the administration of justice is wrong."⁴

1 *Speeches of Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Governor of Madhya Pradesh, Government of Madhya Pradesh, 1956, p. 103.*

2. *Ibid.*, p. 97

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*, p. 98

According to him, "affidavits are wrong, evidence is fabricated and tutored, and cross-examination by a lawyer is often made to drive the witness to corner to elicit some irrelevant information in order to build up a case rather than to arrive at the truth." He certainly used strong words when he said that "there is neither life, nor justice nor sense in the whole process."⁶ At a time when so much is being said about the prevailing legal system and the need for reform, Dr. Pattabhi's plea was certainly well-conceived. I do not know why we should study Justinian's Code and Roman Law. Kautilya's *Arthasastra* is the foundation of legal knowledge and should be studied."⁷

Dr. Pattabhi, though conservative in temperament fully reorganised the fact that everywhere there was a process of change from the old to the new. But "the change itself implies and involves a process of rehabilitation and it requires a thoughtful summary of the past, a scrutiny of the present and a survey of the future."⁸ He was never tired of saying, "Our past always lives in the present and our present always heralds the future."⁹ For instance the police state could not be abandoned nor could a welfare state be ignored. For him mere nationalism freed from the "incubus of colonial autocracy and not harnessed to its internal social content is apt to deteriorate into a change of bureaucracy from the white to the brown, grows selfish and aggressive and ceases to be force making for progress."¹⁰

And for Dr. Pattabhi necessary and noble as it might be, political independence was not the end of the road nor the ultimate aim of truly progressive and constructive national movements. Independence was an opportunity, a golden bridge, a

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, p. 149

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

means to implement still nobler aims such as progress and development, the fight against poverty, disease and ignorance, the realisation of social justice and the creation of good, "efficient democratic government by the people for the people."¹¹

Dr. Pattabhi had given expression to his views on a variety of subjects though as we have seen in the earlier chapters he was essentially a politician with interest in every kind of constructive public activity. On one occasion he said that a vast and unbridgeable charm had come into being "which keeps the people apart" because of the fact that the English education they received during the British regime had made them denationalised and outlandish in their outlook to such an extent that "neither would they pay homage to the time honoured and traditional priests, nor would the latter bow before them." Custom had become petrified and the English judges all along feared to recognise any changes in custom for fear that it might have unwelcome repercussions upon political authority or influence of the race to which they belonged. Dr. Pattabhi declared that now that we were masters of our own country, customs and manners required re-examination. In this context he suggested vital changes in three fields of social life-marriages with divorce and dowries, inheritance and share for women's property. The raising of marriageable age had a great significance according to him. To the impecuniary parents, it was a happy wayout of an intricate problem. The girls were being educated and when they passed out, either they looked up their husbands or the parents still exercised their discretion and judgement in the choice of the bridegroom. Altogether, Dr. Pattabhi held "the fact remains that our married couples marry and love, not love and marry, and our marriages are marriages of one family with another. The families come so much nearer one another that the burdens and duties of the one become the obligations of the other and the two families become one larger family as it were."¹²

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*, p. 60

Dr. Pattabhi in the same utterance said that at one time it was hoped that raising the marriageable age would put an end to the vicious custom of demanding huge dowries by the parents of bridegrooms. But if anything the custom had become aggravated and the "tyranny of the parents of bridegrooms has become unsufferable."¹³ (Recent dowry deaths in many parts of the country point to the existence of this evil now too). Dr. Pattabhi did not, of course, want to exonerate the bridegrooms.

On the subject of divorce, writing in 1953 he had the following to say : "The Hindu Code Bill presented before Parliament contemplated divorce proceedings in Court as compulsory to effect separation in all cases. But it did not take long to see that in Hindu society, there are innumerable castes and tribes whose marriage laws and divorce methods are controlled by long standing customs and cannot all of a sudden be nullified in favour of judicial proceedings which are formal, dilatory, expensive and inconvenient. It was this aspect of the matter discovered in the last moment and emphasised by the then Prime Minister, the Maulana and Rajaji that tolled the death-knell of the Code—much to the discomfiture of the author of the Code. The Code, moreover, embraced subjects of a wide variety which have no rational or organic connection with one another. The decisions on succession and priority in it are varied and may have to be codified. Marriage reform is an urgent necessity. Dowries are a collateral issue and divorce is a consequential measure. Women's share in property is an allied subject but to group them all together under one Bill only brought together the antagonists of each of them and made it appear that the Code had more opposition than was really the case."¹⁴

Dr. Pattabhi thus made a strong and vigorous case, the practical and down-to-earth man he was, for the separation of each of these subjects for purpose of legislation since such a step "has the clear advantage of making prejudices against them no

13. *Ibid.*, p. 163

14 *Ibid.*

longer inter-current or adding fictitious inflated value to them." Of course, he made it clear that it was for the women of the country to bring a fresh mind to bear upon all these problems—precisely, what is being done now.

What are the views of Dr. Pattabhi on public service by people? Addressing the Hoshangabad municipal committee when he was the Governor of Madhya Pradesh, he said that people gave him a doleful tale about the character of the town. "People have taken it for granted that it is a decaying town." He dispelled this idea but then he was keen that it was for the people to make a supreme effort to improve the state of affairs. For instance, he made a pointed reference to the river Narmada and drew a parallel with the Krishna and the Godavari rivers near his own home town. He said: "The great tragedy of the Krishna and the Godavari rivers is that the sands are used as public latrines. I think this river is protected by nature against such atrocities. When we went to the Godavari, we found that the waters were not accessible except by wading through a lot of sands which are befouled by people. The same is the fate of all big rivers in India. Our people have got very contradictory qualities. On one side, they treat the rivers as highly sacred and holy. On the other side their behaviour towards the rivers is heartless."¹⁵

Dr. Pattabhi was for community work by people in the villages. He had occasion to point out that the British people had concentrated their attention upon urban civilisation and, therefore, the turn had come for the villages to take precedence. Quoting an anecdote from his own experience he said when he went to Amaravati, two officers came to him for advice. One of them was a retired officer and the other was about to retire. Their minds were turning towards honorary magistracy or such other things. It was the most natural corollary to 30 years of deputy collectorship. He was then reminded of his early days in Machilipatnam where he set up medical practice. He was

15. *Ibid.*, p. 114

then living in a dilapidated house, the owner being a retired deputy collector living in Rajahmundry, the place where the Godavari flows and he had just then accepted the presidentship of a first class bench. Dr. Pattabhi least expected that the gentleman who was well-read in Telugu and Sanskrit literature would spend his leisure in a bench court. He put up a proposition to him as to why he had taken up this work. The latter explained in reply that he had been a deputy collector with three peons and after he retired there was not a single peon. He said, "I have no wife, but there are three old widows in the house who are taunting me saying that my Deputy Collectorship was not worth even a chaprasi's post after I retired. That is why I accepted this post."

Dr. Pattabhi felt it was a plausible explanation but cautioned that the time had come when their attention had to be diverted. "We need not think of municipal institutions or honorary magistracy if we want to do public work which can be really carried on with efficiency in a very private way. The only thing is that this term of service does not bring you to limelight. One simple matter is to keep the streets clean. I had advised the officer in Amaravati who sought my advice to concern himself with such matters. At first sight they are not likely to appeal to one's imagination, but when we really consider the importance of sanitation in towns and cities, we shall certainly be convinced of the necessity of addressing ourselves to those points which appear to be trivial. We should study the social conditions and social evils that are harassing society. No problem is too small for anyone's attention."¹⁶

Indeed for Dr. Pattabhi cleanliness was as important as the most subtle political issue and as Governor of Madhya Pradesh, he did a great deal to instil in the minds of the impressionable youth the need to conduct themselves in a disciplined manner.

At the age of 30, Dr. Pattabhi contested the municipal election in Machilipatnam and what happened then reveals an impor-

16. *Ibid.*, p. 117

tant, trait of the man. In the election, he was actually defeated getting 104 votes to 108 received by his opponent. "But in my dictionary, the word 'defeat' does not occur because every defeat is only a preliminary step to success."¹⁷ The next time he had an easy victory, "but the voters were not as enthusiastic about me as before." Why? Here is his answer. "We have about 16 rice factories in my town and each of them used paddy husk as fuel for the mill and, therefore, from the chimneys a shower of unburnt husk spreads itself all over the town. If you dry your clothes or anything in the open, they are simply covered with charcoal dust. I wanted it to be stopped in the town. I did succeed. In the next elections I was defeated."¹⁸

The moral of it, according to Dr. Pattabhi, was that when one went and did his duty conscientiously without any self-interest in a public institution, one may rest assured that one would not be wanted if there was dependence on vested interests for support. But if one depended on mass consciousness and mass enlightenment, there was bound to be success. Of course, he did not want to contest the next time for he knew he would fail. But a big deputation came to him and compelled him to stand. He succeeded but later on when he was pressed to continue, he thought it better to retire. Says Dr. Pattabhi in his usual way, "I consider it a very good rule of conduct for us all, whether you are a municipal councillor or an honorary magistrate, do not stay on there until you are asked to go; you had better go while you are further being asked to stay."¹⁹ One should imagine that this conveys a message to all—whatever profession, calling or occupation one chooses. Dr. Pattabhi, for his part, fully followed what he preached.

"When all is said and done", Dr. Pattabhi said in a somewhat reflective mood, "when battles are fought for liberty when revolutions end monarchies because their rule is personal and auto-

17. *Ibid.*, p. 120

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*, p. 121

cratic, when constitutions are granted to a country and purport to be of the people, by the people, for the people, what matters is not the written word in which is embodied the ideal of freedom, brought down from its simmering heights to the hard earth, on which we live and move, and have our being, but the true liberties of meeting, speaking, serving, moving, marrying, worshipping, trading and working. It is these that form the foundation and plinth of the edifice of a nation's freedom."²⁰ From this, Dr. Pattabhi goes on to elaborate his concept of democracy. He was in a way influenced by certain words in the American Declaration of Independence—"that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inherent and inalienable rights, amongst these, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". All democracies, Dr. Pattabhi says, not only concede but are constructed on these rights as their well and truly laid foundation and provide for all people the economic, social and human liberties" which communism denies them."²¹ Political liberty, for Dr. Pattabhi, was the one instrument which in the broadest sense could alone set mankind free.

What then were the priorities for India ? Dr. Pattabhi says, "we will have to face our new problems of self-government, problems of dealing successfully with the infinitely complex and myriad elements that make up national life, on the strength of our own aptitudes and resources."²² He was not unconscious that on occasions veiled encroachments on democracy emanated from "the brains of men who were descendents of the Pilgrim Fathers of old, of Washington and Jefferson, of William Penn and Abraham Lincoln"; the truth was still in the paradox that the upsurge for national self-determination among the dependent peoples came at a particular stage of human history. On the one hand, one could see, as Dr. Pattabhi was wont to observe,

20. *Ibid.*, p. 254

21. *Ibid.*, p. 255

22. *Ibid.*,

how the western nations no longer believed in the philosophy of self-sufficiency, and if peace, prosperity and freedom should be maintained, they could be maintained only within a commonwealth or concert of free peoples which transcended national boundaries.

Here, he said, was the indication of an internationalism which must carve out its own combinations having regard to mutual needs. "Mankind has yet to learn that, to improvise all sorts of alliances, affinities and even affiliations which imply a fractional surrender of their own sovereignty. Just as a world clock shows different timings at the same moment, a world clock of democracy which we may well call the 'Democrometer' points to different levels of freedom constituting a single brotherhood which must be guided and controlled by a single World Federation which knows no new types of imperialism and cannot spread its tentacles to grasp new quarters of the world.²³"

Dr. Pattabhi was highly critical of what he called a new colonialism imposed in the communist countries and says, "It is for the peoples of Asia and Africa to avoid the Charybdis of this new colonialism which knows no mercy, in getting clear of the Scylla of old colonialism which had led nations ultimately to freedom."²⁴ Dr. Pattabhi observed the change from the old to the new as a process of transition but he underscored that "change itself implies and involves a process of rehabilitation and it requires a thoughtful summary of the past, a scrutiny of the present and a survey of the future".

Dr. Pattabhi did not think that it was just the process of transformation of the colonial form of government into independence that India had evolved. "Simultaneously, we are organising Independence not for the petty and petulant idea of getting rid of an incubus but for the larger concept of evolving our newly got independence as a means for the establishment

23. *Ibid.*, p. 256

24. *Ibid.*

of the welfare state.”²⁵ The new ideal of the welfare state, in his opinion, was acting as a genuine and powerful incentive to the people—hitherto remaining tardy and unconcerned—to bestir themselves and take the initiative in examining local needs and exploring local remedies. He could see that popular interest was being followed up everywhere by popular initiative. He was even happy that the country was awake and astir and that, according to him, was the condition pre-requisite to the realisation of a welfare state. That indeed was also the meaning of the statement that “Freedom does not descend upon a people, but that a people must raise themselves to Freedom. Freedom is a prize that must be won before it is enjoyed”.

Dr. Pattabhi was, of course, emphatic that no state could be regarded as a welfare state so long as there was unemployment or underemployment in the land, and so long as labour within the limited employment was not contented. In the old days, according to him, the problem was solved by adopting a mixed economy that embraced villages and towns, agriculture and industry, crafts and arts. The conditions having changed, the nation had to vigorously try to catch up with the times but he believed that no measure of industrial progress could provide full employment. Although, therefore, “we may develop our power industries for meeting immediate national needs, it looks as though we have nevertheless to fall back upon our home crafts and cottage industries for ensuring wider and fuller employment”. At the same time, he realised that that way did not lie the path to a raising of the standard of life, but in countries where the standards had risen the result had been obtained by largely exploiting backward nations. The movement towards self-sufficiency was an effective answer to this kind of exploitation. Dr. Pattabhi also believed that the methods visualised in respect of a welfare state were even more important than merely the ends held in view.

Dr. Pattabhi, wherever he spoke and from whatever platform

25. *Ibid.*, p. 252

he had the opportunity to address, reminded the people that the transfer of power had increased their burden and responsibilities. What was meant by Swaraj was that the people acquired the right to help themselves. He cautioned, 'until you settle your village disputes amongst yourselves, you cannot raise the foundations of Swaraj all right. One evil that has grown in the later days of the British rule is our rushing to courts and the magistracy for every small dispute which could have been settled by the advice of the elders in our own villages. You know when you go to the court, you cannot get justice. The white is proved to be black and the black becomes white. False becomes truth and truth becomes false. However honest the magistrate may be, he can only go by evidence and evidence given at a distance from the scene of dispute is bound to be coloured. We must settle disputes within the boundaries of the village. Don't spend your money on litigation.

It has already been noted that Dr. Pattabhi took to Harijan welfare long before it ever became an article of faith and an important creed with Gandhiji and his programme of national reconstruction. In fact, the activities of the Brahma Samaj with which Dr. Pattabhi had considerable sympathy and the social reforms under the able and inspiring guidance of Venkataratnam Naidu who was a mentor of Dr. Pattabhi had well and truly laid the foundation of the Harijan movement. Dr. Pattabhi relates an incident that happened at a conference of Harijan Sevak Sangh in Berhampore in 1937 and this was reported in *The Harijan*.

He said, "R. Venkataratnam Naidu noticed four helpless Harijan children at the Ponneri railway station near Madras and assigned to me (Dr. Pattabhi) and to the late Mokkapatu Subbarayudu, then Diwan of Pitapuram Estate, to pick up those four girls in order to save them from the perdition that was awaiting them.

"After immense effort and trouble from porters and the police and with the co-operation of the magistrate of the

place, we succeeded in removing them and they have since been brought up and educated, the last two having been married to two Brahmin graduates. I cherish this event in my humble life as having planted my first interest in the Harijan community, and ever since I entered the profession in 1906 I ceased to observe untouchability and have allowed Harijan servants to roam about the house, touch the clothing and the children.

“What you think could have been the effect of all this in the years 1906 to 1920? The public were simply scandalised by such heresies and when in 1910, we started the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala and seated the Savarna and Avarna boys together in the same classes, there was a howl and when I allowed my Harijan servant to touch my well, I was given the notice to quit and turned out of my rented house. There is the Kalasala; we had threats from the donors. But nothing daunted, we carried on our campaign through good report and bad with unabated zeal. The Kalasala gave up an annual income of several rupees from the year 1912 onwards.

“In 1915, I started a cooperative society for the scavengers of the municipality of Masulipatam. My fellow Councillors had no faith in any such constructive endeavour directed to the good of the scavengers who were borrowing at 72 per cent interest per annum and whose repayments to the extent of Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 a year towards the debt of Rs. 100 would not even clear the interest. The Councillors were, however, persuaded not only to start a society, but to borrow Rs. 1500 in order to liquidate their prior debts bearing interest at 72 per cent per annum. The caste heads of the community were not agreeable to the proposition. But the men wanted it and when the secret was found, it was discovered that the four caste heads were entrusted by the *sahukar* with the duty of collecting the instalments for which they were duly rewarded by the way of commission. For

this they wanted to sell their men to the *sahukar*. At the other end, the Councillors feared that the 200 scavenger families might bolt away one night. Was it conceivable that a thousand people would march to an unknown place and starve in order to cheat the Council of the advance given to them? The spirit of helpfulness was dead among modern educated people and a timely admonition restored their balance of judgement. The society was registered."

Dr. Pattabhi records that the pre-existing debts were cleared and he was gratified to find that within ten months, the whole advance of Rs. 1500 was repaid, debts extending over a decade were obliterated in less than a year, prudential deposits began to be collected and the salaries instead of being paid in cash began to be given in kind through the distribution of rice every week. Ere long, a colony was built for them with a temple and reading room for them, the payment in kind nearly abolished drink and a new era of prosperity and happiness opened out for those unfortunate people in the year 1915.

Dr. Pattabhi was indeed a champion of the poor and the down trodden. He was very unhappy that money began to go from the villages to the towns and from the towns to the cities. The villages became poor and even labour began to migrate from villages. The village economy which was functioning through the circulation of money in the villages itself was cut almost at every point and Dr. Pattabhi had no doubt that it was this that contributed to the drain of money from the village to the town and thence to the city and abroad. Whereas formerly a schoolmaster was maintaining the carpenter, the cobbler was maintaining the weaver, the weaver was maintaining the spinner and all were maintaining the farmer, the dhobi and the barber, now everyone sent his money abroad and money was no longer conserved in the village. And Dr. Pattabhi was very keen that "the self-sufficient economy of the village may have to be restored in a modified form".

Dr. Pattabhi, being a nationalist to the core, was particular

about the regional languages in the country. Addressing a conference in Sevagram in 1952, he said that there were ten regional languages, each highly rich in its own literature. And this precious heritage of each State was a 'sealed book' to the other States. He asked, "May we not cultivate a richer nationalism by encouraging a study of the regional languages of a neighbour State by the citizens of one State?"²⁶ It was thus possible to prepare scholars who would render the literature of one regional language into the other languages. This only required, he pointed out, each State to set apart a fixed amount each year to award a cash prize each to every person who learnt up a second language. Thus, for instance, a hundred scholars would learn an extra regional language—perhaps at the rate of ten each. This would rise phoenix like from the ashes of denationalisation and outlandishness, a new nation reinforced by, what he called, all that was great and glorious in the national asset and replenished with all that was modern and progressive.

Essentially modern and progressive in outlook Dr. Pattabhi advocated the supreme value of science. Science, he said, had all along to wage a warfare with some cherished belief or other. So late as in the early part of the nineteenth century, he pointed out, it was a crime punishable in law to teach in the classes that the earth was revolving round the Sun. The heliocentric theory was an anathema. The scientific frame of mind was unknown. The progress of science might have affected human life and promoted human happiness "but not altered human thinking". He lamented that the best students of modern education were, at home, the victims of ancient prejudice and superstition under a sense of fear that something unknown might hurt the child that was ill unless a sacrifice was made or pilgrimage was performed. In other words the method had not penetrated human thought processes.

To put it briefly, as he observed, men had not acquired the

26. *Ibid.*, p. 81

scientific temperament. But then he was not prepared to deride Indian achievements in this field for, as he says, there are fields of science which are condemned by the Western scholars as fantastic but which have flourished for ages in the Oriental countries." Palmistry, astrology and physiognomy were three of these sciences, Dr. Pattabhi makes special mention of Our *Upanishads*, he pointed out, speak of the "greater than the greatest, smaller than the smallest"²⁷ and today, "that much condemned atom is the source of power that bursts the atom bomb and destroys whole cities". Science was not unknown to the ancients. Kautilya had described four kinds of sciences. And more recently there was Dr. Y. Subba Rao, a co-Andhra, who discovered aureomycin, and in the words of Dr. Pattabhi "restored" to India its former 'pre-eminence' as a source of healing drugs. Of course, he admitted that all research was something like groping in the dark. If you fail, all research is speculation. If you succeed, all speculation is research. If you add one link to a chain, you may produce a wonderful drug. Thus a little superstition and speculation is a valuable aid to science.²⁸

But he cautioned that a scientist who did not lend himself to these advantageous aids might be labelled as superstitious. Knowledge was the heritage of mankind and science the property of the universe. For Dr. Pattabhi the scientist combined the qualities of a statesman, the warrior, the poet and the philosopher. The statesman has the virtues of foresight and wisdom, the warrior his strategy and tactics, the poet his imagination and emotion, the philosopher his introspection and insight. What makes all these perform their distinctive duty or function, namely, the statesman that rules, the warrior that fights, the poet that sings and the philosopher that contemplates. Their qualities are not certainly the shrewdness of the statesman, the prowess of the warrior, or the aesthetic sense of the poet or the transcendentalism of the philosopher. The scientist combines all these

27. *Ibid.*, p. 183

28. *Ibid.*, p. 190

qualities. He rules like the statesman through his discoveries and inventions, he fights like the warrior the enemies of mankind through his antibiotics, he sings like the poet the psalm of the life through the conquest of death and he contemplates like the philosopher in his researches by peering into the future.”²⁹ But, says Dr. Pattabhi, his most important quality essential to success is humility.

Whatever the work Dr. Pattabhi undertook to complete, it was done with an amazing swiftness that was so characteristic of him. A contemporary journalist, Iswara Dutt, remarked of him. “He walks fast, he talks fast, he thinks fast, he writes fast”. Both as a medical practitioner and as a politician Dr. Pattabhi was known for the quickness of his diagnosis. Not only was he ‘quick’ he was also known for the accuracy of his estimation of any situation—be it political, economic or social. Dr. Pattabhi’s theories had a basis in practical experience. He was not a mere academic intellectual whose role in the struggle for independence, he felt, was grossly over-rated. He was greatly influenced by the simplicity and soundness of Mahatma Gandhi’s doctrines and he interpreted them with such subtlety and skill that Gandhi himself was led to say, “I am the bania sutrakara, and Pattabhi is my brahmin commentator”.³⁰

Dr. Pattabhi was famed for his mastery over the English and Telugu languages. It is often related how Dr. Pattabhi would hold an English newspaper and read out the news in Telugu ! In addition to Telugu and English, he had a high degree of fluency in Sanskrit, Urdu and Hindi. A majority of his works and speeches were in English for it was the dominant language in public life. He was more at home with it also because he belonged to a generation whose education was entirely in the English medium.

His first works were in English. *Indian National Education*

29. *Ibid.*

30. Quoted by Prasanna Kumar, A., *Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : A Political Study*, P. 126

(1910), was produced jointly with his friend Kopalle Hanumantha Rao, the founder of the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala. *Indian Nationalism* was published three years later. Notable among his writings in English are : “*On Khaddar*” (1931); *Socialism and Gandhism* (1938); *Gandhi and Gandhism*—published in two volumes (1942); *The History of the Indian National Congress*—Volume One (1935), and Volume Two (1947); and *Feathers and Stones* (1946).

Dr. Pattabhi's works are known as much for the valuable information they contain as for the niceties of style and diction. The manner in which the information is conveyed lends a certain depth to his writings. Undoubtedly, *The History of the Indian National Congress* is his *magnum opus*. It is a remarkable achievement, considering he did not have the luxury of a reference library. The assimilation of the material—historical and political and its systematization were the work of a single man. The two large volumes make very absorbing reading. Though an active participant in national politics, Dr. Pattabhi was able to maintain an objectivity in his narrative which is the hall-mark of a good historian and critic. The manner in which he described the political events at the Tripuri session of the Congress event though he was the person around whom the whole controversy developed—he was set up as a candidate by Gandhiji for the presidency and was defeated by Subhash Bose—speaks abundantly of his quality as a historian. Because of this objectivity that he maintained, he never lost his sense of humour even while describing the most solemn events.

Describing the 53rd session of the Congress held at Ramgarh in March 1940, he writes :

“The functions at Ramgarh were organised to take place with the customary eclat at *Mazhar Nagar* as the improvised city was named. Subjects' Committee, exhibition, public meetings, all went off well, except the open session, which was arranged to take place in the picturesque depression of this tableland. But nature frowned and the whole field was

filled with thigh-deep waters by the onset of a strong rain which took its timing precisely so as to synchronise with the time of the Congress. The elders of the Congress braved it all. Nor was there a place where to hide one's head for it was all open. In a moment the sea of men and women with children in their arms, dressed in their best attire became converted into a village of huts which were made up for the nonce by the mats below their feet serving as the roofs above their heads. But the storm blew with such ferocity that delegates and visitors, mats and umbrellas, thousands of them began to move in a stream, with children soaked to the bone, clasped to their bosoms. It was in the midst of this cataclysm of nature that the chairman of the Reception Committee and the President got through their respective functions though the addresses had to be taken for read and the resolution of the day was just moved by Jawaharlal and postponed to the morrow. The Congress was more fortunate the next day and that for just the length of time that the session conducted with leisure and dignity occupied. It met round the flag staff, where the grounds were high and dry and the historic decision of the Congress supported by a speech from Gandhi no less historic, was taken in the midst of the utmost solemnity and seriousness by an audience that sat around the flag mast which itself stood on a brown and yellow Asoka pillar imitation 30 ft. high in front of the main gate of Mazhar Nagar".³¹

What strikes us most about Dr. Pattabhi's writings is his sense of proportion. He saw India's war against Britain as the Kurukshetra war in the *Mahabharatha* fought between Truth and Evil, and the triumph of India as the triumph of Dharma. This parallel is brought out with the utmost clarity in the second volume of the *History of the Congress* in which he says :

31. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, p. 166.

“To Lord Linlithgow and Britain, the problem was whether to rest contented with the unqualified, the spontaneous, the heartfelt, the instinctive support of Gandhi, or seek the material co-operation of India with her unnumbered numbers, with her millions of warriors known alike for their prowess and sacrifice, alike for their skill and strength and alike for their daring and endurance, India with her poverty, want, backward industrial lot, and above all with her apathy and listlessness towards a war that the people could not by any means be persuaded to regard as their own. In other words, the choice lay between the upraised finger of Gandhi calling forth the sympathies of the whole nation for Britain on the one hand, and on the other, the prospect of recruitment in millions, exploitation of the ‘barbaric pearl and gold’ of Milton, in crores. No wonder if the choice between the moral and material forces confronted Arjuna and Duryodhana.

“When the Pandavas had concluded their twelve years of *Aranyavas* and one year of *Ajnatavas*, while yet they were in the court of Virata, King Drupada sent his Purohit as a mediator to Duryodhana’s court to explore all avenues to peace by ‘easy arguments of love’. By that time, Duryodhana himself had left with his retinue for Shree Krishna’s place and on entering the Royal Palace found Krishna sleeping. So he went in and seated himself on an exalted seat on Krishna’s headside. Lo and behold entered Arjuna also who, however, in all humility stood at the side of Krishna’s feet. Shree Krishna woke up and first saw Arjuna standing at his feet while next he turned aside and saw Duryodhana by the side of his head and enquired of them both the mission which had brought them thither.

“Duryodhana said, ‘We have come to seek your help in the war between us which has now become inevitable. They and we are both equally close relations to you. I

have however come here first; good men accept those who first approach them, the moment they see them. You are of an exalted and benevolent nature. Therefore, you must be my ally considering the way of the world.' Thereupon Shree Krishna replied: 'You have come here first. That is true. But I have seen Arjuna first. I must, therefore, offer co-operation to both of you in a manner befitting your position. I now contrive a suitable device. I have 10,000 *gopalas*, who are the embodiments of the Science and Art of warfare, adepts in the wielding of weapons like arrows, and other. On one side, you have them who are able to wage war in the name of Narayana. Here am I on the other side, unarmed, passive, (but) an ardent well-wisher. Make your choice between the two. The younger of you two has the first choice. And Shree Krishna looked towards Kiriti (Arjuna) and said, 'It is meant that you should express your wish first'. Vijaya (Arjuna) then chose Krishna and being pleased with this, Duryodhana chose the armies of Shree Krishna and with the utmost satisfaction repaired to Balarama's place. Arjuna who chose the moral force, support and co-operation of Shree Krishna won in the battle with Shree Krishna as his charioteer, his guide, philosopher and friend. Could not Linlithgow have made Gandhi his monitor and mentor, his guide, philosopher and friend and won in this war a triumph of Truth over Untruth, of non-violence over violence ?"³²

Such was the force of Dr. Pattabhi's writings. His descriptive style, the picturesqueness of his language, the subtle and ironic humour dispel the tedium which would have otherwise pervaded a work of this kind. The vividness of metaphor is revealed in lines such as these—"This spectacle of Europeans in Bengal and Assam claiming their full pound of flesh looked as if the thorns that are swept away alongwith the debris floating

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129

about the surface of a flood, claimed their place with the thatch in the reconstruction of the abode of nationalism".³³

Also much valued are his miniature character sketches which are scattered throughout the two volumes of *The History of the Indian National Congress*. Much is conveyed in a few lines filled with terse epithets that seem to pound into the brain with a hammer-like force. He says of Lord Linlithgow :

"....Linlithgow's was the most dramatic Viceroyaltyfor a drama may be a comedy or a tragedy and in this case it was the latter with Linlithgow as the hero. He was a ponderous character,—heavy in build, stolid in temperament, slow in understanding, conservative in politics, imperialistic in outlook, vain as a peacock with none of its beauties, egotistic to a degree, ceremonial-ridden, inaccessible, formal in manners, uncommunicative and reserved in habits, flamboyant and circumlocutious in his pursuit of precision, ineffective, unpurposeful in action, unsympathetic and callous at heart. He created suspicions in the minds of the people because of his want of frankness, so much so that his avowal of geographical and economic unity of India and his advocacy of Federation as the need of the hour to work it out, were received with a grain of salt because people doubted how the fission he had encouraged between the Hindus and Muslims communally, between the Provinces and the States territorially, between the Caste Hindus and Depressed Classes socially, between the regulation provinces and the scheduled areas economically, were compatible with the many sided unity that he had rightly but orally advocated....

"He left behind a cumbersome record of frustration and futility to the historian and an unenviable legacy to his successor and departed not the shores of India but the mausoleums of Delhi unhonoured, unwept, unsung."³⁴

33. *Ibid.*, p. 799

34. *Ibid.*, p. 560.

Dr. Pattabhi was taken to task by some writers for having said as a member of the Congress Working Committee in 1938 that "if there is anyone who imagines our party structure should be subordinated to the flimsy notions of democratic and parliamentary conventions, let that person remember that we are in a stage of transition. Those goody-goody notions of constitutional propriety are not applicable to the Congress in the present conditions".³⁵ It must be remembered that he was uttering these words when for the first time the Congress Party accepted office in provinces under the Government of India Act of 1935.

Dr. Pattabhi was actually justifying the action of the Working Committee in the "Khare Case". Dr. Khare, Congress premier in the Central Provinces, resigned but was unable to persuade his colleagues to do so because they said resignations had not been ordered by the Congress Parliamentary Board. Dr. Khare formed a new cabinet but the Parliamentary Board condemned this independent move and secured Dr. Khare's replacement as leader of the Central Provinces Legislature Congress Party. Further, Dr. Pattabhi's statement has to be viewed in the context of what Gandhiji had said, namely, "Congress is democratic in its internal administration but for the job of fighting the greatest imperialist power, it has to be likened to an army. As such it ceases to be democratic. The Central authority has plenary powers enabling it to impose and enforce discipline on the various units working under it."³⁶

Dr. Pattabhi was a born optimist and he was greatly impressed by the way India remained firm as a rock, unshaken by the storms that swept the country, untouched by corroding civilisations that appeared and disappeared, untainted by the corrupting forces that rose and fell, but all the while stretching forth her generous arms in spacious embrace of race after race, in deep absorption of culture and rapid assimilation of religion

35. Aiyar, S.P. and Srinivasan, S. (ed.) *Studies in Indian Democracy*, p. 693.

36. Quoted by Morris-Jones, W.H., *Parliament in India*, p. 68.

after religion. Dr. Pattabhi said, "Thus was it too that, through the endless ages of her dim and distant, pre-historic past, she has created hoary traditions of undying vigour and undiminishing value, and handed them down to the recurring generations of an ever receding present as their priceless heritage, so helping to build up her inscrutable future radiant with faith and enlivened by hope—a future that will doubtless be hoary with Age and sanctified by Time."³⁷ The true follower of Gandhiji all through his life, Dr. Pattabhi paid a glorious tribute to him in the most striking phrases. "The greatest man of the World—Saint, Philosopher and Statesman all in one, who has established the unity of the World by a new synthesis and worked out the unity of man through the Beatitudes of Life".³⁸

37. Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 826.

38 *ibid.*, p. 827.

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